

# **Sri Venkateswara Temple Helensburgh Limited**

## **Manual of Code of Conduct for Company's Hindu Ministers of Religion**

### **PART 1**

#### **General Administrative Process**

##### **Context**

The aim of this Code is to establish a common understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of all Hindu Ministers of Religion employed/contracted by the Company.

This Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of your work. Instead, it represents a broad framework that will help you decide on an appropriate course of action when you are faced with an ethical issue.

##### **Definition**

A brief definition of code of conduct is given to set out the need and the context so that you, Minister of Religion, would be aware of your obligations, duties and responsibilities in complying with the rules.

A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the social norms and religious rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, group or organization. Related concepts include ethical, honour, moral codes and religious laws. It helps to set a standard in the workplace for the staff/members so that they know what could be expected of them in that environment and any contravention of the code could result in adverse consequences after a fair process of review by Management.

##### **General Requirements**

You must:

- engage in personal or professional conduct that upholds the reputation of the Company;
- apply the Company's policies and procedures as communicated to you verbally or in writing;
- act ethically and responsibly; and
- Be accountable for your actions and decisions.

As an employee, contractee or casual employee (Minister of Religion), you should be aware of the Company's policies, procedures and delegations, particularly those that apply to your work. If you are uncertain about the scope or content of a policy with which you must comply, you should seek clarification from Management. You should also be familiar with the legislation under which you are employed as this may specify requirements with which you need to comply.

As an employee/contractee of the Company, you are expected to:

- perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance;
- follow reasonable instructions given by a supervisor;
- comply with a lawful direction;
- carry out your duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve your knowledge and skills, including through participation in relevant professional development;
- act honestly and in good faith in providing advice or service that is honest, impartial and comprehensive, irrespective of your personal views on a matter;
- be courteous and responsive in dealing with your colleagues, students and members of the public;
- work collaboratively with your colleagues;
- be mindful of your duty to the safety of yourself and others; and
- Be aware that if your conduct has the potential to damage the reputation of the Association, even if it is in a private capacity, this could lead to disciplinary action.

As an employee/contractee (Minister of Religion), of the Company, you hold a position of trust and are accountable for your actions.

### **Consequences of Breach**

Where there has been, actual or perceived breach, the Board of Management has several options to consider when deciding what action to take include:

- the seriousness of the breach;
- the likelihood of the breach occurring again;
- whether the officer has committed the breach more than once;
- the risk the breach poses to employees, devotees or any others who visit the temple; and
- Whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

The Board of Management shall give you notice, in writing as well as verbally, by way of warning detailing the breaches and outlining the course of action proposed. Under normal circumstances actions that may apply to proven (after investigation) breaches of the Code can include management or remedial action, or disciplinary action ranging from a caution and reprimand to dismissal.

The outcome of criminal proceedings against employees may be considered as possible breaches of the Code of Conduct and action, including disciplinary action,

### **Process of Inquiry & Discipline**

Procedural fairness will be followed as it requires a decision-maker to:

- inform you of the allegations made against you
- give you an opportunity to respond, and
- Not have a personal interest in the outcome.

## **PART 2**

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **Applicable Legislations**

The following legislation is also relevant in relation to your conduct and behaviour and may apply to your actions and activities:

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Crimes Act 1900
- Freedom of Information Act 1989
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994,

#### **Specific Code of conduct**

##### **1. Morning Abulations**

You must follow achara, bath and complete your prayers, prior to the preparation of special food offering to the deities at Sri Venkateswara Temple and Sri Shiva Temple every morning.

Ritual purification in Hinduism is an important part where bathing of the entire body, particularly in rivers considered holy or another source of water such as pipe borne water in Australia is mandatory. You must observe this ritual prior to entering the temple to perform poojas and other rituals.

##### **2. Attendance, Punctuality and Performance**

Attendance is a key factor in your job performance. As an employee of **Company**, you are expected to be punctual and regular in attendance and commence your temple duties as per the Duty Statement contained in your Employment Contract. Tardiness or absenteeism problems can cause problems for your fellow employees and the Management. When you are absent, others may be required to perform your assigned work.

It is the Board of Management's responsibility to determine when an employee's absenteeism becomes excessive. Excessive absences, unauthorized absences, tardiness, or leaving work early without authorization is not acceptable. This may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

##### **3. Conflict of Interest resulting in financial gain by deceit, fraud, misappropriation**

As an employee of the Company, you must be objective and impartial, and be seen to be so. A conflict of interests can involve:

- pecuniary interests i.e. financial gain or loss or other material benefits
- Non-pecuniary interests i.e. favour personal relationships and associations.

It may not only be about your own interests. It may include:

- the interests of members of your immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known)
- the interests of your own business partners or associates, or those of your workplace
- the interests of your friends.

Donations in kind such as gold, silver, precious stones by devotees must be immediately recorded in the Register maintained for the purpose and the item/s handed over to the Treasurer.

Likewise, devotees who leave other in-kind donations such as rice, dhal, food items too must not be taken for personal use, unless approval is given by the Board of Management.

#### **4. Outside services**

You, being an employee/contractee of the Company must not accept request for services by third parties, to be performed outside the Temple premises, unless such requests are officially recorded and sanctioned by the Board of Management, for which the third party has made the necessary payment to the Company.

Any unauthorised performance of services to third parties will be considered as a serious breach of code of conduct and may result in severe disciplinary action including dismissal, after due process.

#### **5. Access to Priests' Quarters within the Temple Properties**

No person, other than the occupant of the quarters, will have access to the premises. Under no circumstances family or friends of the occupant shall have access to them. More importantly no family member or friends of other priests shall have access to them.

Meals/Prasadams for the priests, prepared during special occasion and kept in the quarters, are meant to be consumed by them only. No other person, whether he/she be a family member or friend, should be allowed to partake in the meal, except if permission is granted by the Board of Management for that purpose.

#### **6. Prohibition of use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco**

You are prohibited from any use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco under any circumstances. You are responsible for ensuring your capacity to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person's health and safety. As an employee of the Company, you must not attend work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances; not endanger your own safety or the safety of any other person in the workplace by consuming alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed and/or restricted substances.

Any instances of such practice will result in severe disciplinary action including dismissal, after due process.

## **7. Vegetarian Diet**

You are prohibited, as a Hindu Minister of Religion, from consuming non-vegetarian meal which includes meat, fish, egg, other sea food. You are also prohibited from having meals at Restaurants, cafes etc that also serve non-vegetarian meals.

You are required to consume Sattvic food items (purity): This includes pure foods such as fruits; vegetables; grains; proteins like legumes, nuts, and seeds; herbs; natural sweeteners; and dairy products. These foods promote vitality, energy, health, and joy. They encourage the mind to be pure and calm and are uplifting to the spirit.

## **8. Virtues of non-stealing/non-gambling**

You are required to uphold the virtue of non-stealing, thieving, coveting or failing to repay debt. You must control your desires and live within your means. You must not gamble or defraud others. Do not use others' names, words, resources or rights without permission and acknowledgement.

You must not perform poojas or any other ritual for a devotee without the appropriate docket/ticket issued by the Company. Any instances of such practice will result in severe disciplinary action including dismissal after due process.

## **9. Moral Behaviour (Brahmacharya)**

Brahmacharya is the virtue of celibacy when unmarried and fidelity when married. It represents a virtuous lifestyle that also includes simple living, meditation and other behaviours.

If you are a married man you must conduct yourself in such a manner that you remain faithful to your wife and family; have an honest and open relationship. Any deviation from this code of conduct would be dealt with immediate termination, after due process.

If you are a bachelor you are required to follow the acharas of a Brahmacharya. The brahmacharya (bachelor student) stages of one's life, up to twenty-five years of age, or until you are married. You are prohibited from allowing women other than your mother or sisters to enter your dwelling and must not develop a carnal relationship with a devotee or visitor at any circumstances. Any deviation from this code of conduct would be dealt with immediate termination, after due process.

## **10. Ministry to children and youth**

Ministry to children and youth is often part of priestly function. It is your duty to ensure that you never transgress appropriate boundaries or limits of behaviour or speech with the young. Such prudent precautions would include but not be limited to avoiding being alone with children and youth, except for situations of ministry in which this is necessary, and then, having a responsible adult nearby, if it is not possible to have that person physically present. You shall never have activities alone with children or youth, and should always have appropriate adult chaperones or assistants present.

## **11. Anti Discrimination**

You must not discriminate against or harass your colleagues, devotees or members of the public on a number of grounds including; sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual preference. Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. In addition, you must not harass or discriminate on the grounds of political or religious conviction.

## **12. Respect, courtesy and tolerance**

Your daily interaction with others reflects on the Company's reputation. Therefore, you are expected to be approachable, courteous and prompt in dealing with devotees, visitors including other employees (irrespective of their position or seniority) and members of the community.

In dealing with other people, you should be able to accommodate and tolerate different opinions and perspectives, and sort out your disagreements by rational discussion.