

Briercrest Seminary Student Life Covenant

Students of Briercrest Seminary are part of a distinctive community with a unique mission and vision. Engaged in this mission is a diverse group of people: students, faculty, staff and external partners. Students themselves live in diverse circumstances. Some students live on campus. Others commute to class from various other locations in Canada and the United States. Our seminary is proudly international, and includes students who come from various areas of the world. We are also an interdenominational seminary, with representative students from a myriad of various church traditions.

In addition, Seminary education is a unique experience. Relationships between students and faculty and staff tend to be different from the way these relationships played out in undergraduate education. Students are typically older, often have families, and many of them have been in ministry for some time already.

At the same time as we celebrate this distinctiveness and diversity, we recognize that Briercrest is not an abstract community of Christians. It has a particular history and calling in theological education and to this end it is necessary to identify those aspects of conduct that will shape and inform a set of expectations for student life within the seminary community. Our intent in defining those areas of student life expectation is not to reduce the character of our community to mere contractual obligations. Rather our purpose is to provide a clear sense of how we as a community understand some of the main contours of Christian character and behavior as we live life together.

Seminary students are to conduct their lives in a way that is exemplary and supports the principles and practices that follow. Included in this, seminary students will recognize the broader biblical injunction to abstain from behavior that sets an inappropriate example.

Seminary students are also expected to establish in their lives the spiritual disciplines they need to maintain and promote a relationship with God, which is essential to effective service to Christ. This includes such practices as prayer, Bible study, corporate worship, stewardship, and faithful Christian witness. Seminary students are to attend regularly and participate faithfully in a church whose beliefs are consistent with what is believed and taught within Briercrest College and Seminary.

Moreover, because of our commitment to Christ and our particular identity as an educational community, we affirm the following guiding principles as central to our life together. Seminary students whether on or off campus are expected to conduct themselves in the light of these principles:

We view learning and the pursuit of truth as a Christian calling.

We believe that life is sacred and people have worth because they are created in God's image.

We believe that our relationships should reflect our connection in the body of Christ.

We believe that our speech and attitudes toward other human beings should be shaped by grace and generous love.

We believe our minds and bodies should be used in God-honouring ways.

We view sexuality as one of God's good gifts.

We value the wise stewardship of resources.

We believe that maturity calls for us to exercise discretion in our behaviours.

We believe that everyone should be treated with equal respect and care regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, age, or disability.

Without limiting the spirit of these expectations and principles, Briercrest College and Seminary will not condone conduct such as the following in any context:

- dishonesty and deceit in personal or business relationships, including plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty
- theft, fraud, or gambling
- substance abuse (including the use of alcohol, tobacco, or other substances, either legal or illegal.)
- verbal, emotional, or physical abuse
- slander and other breaches of trust or confidence
- the possession and use of pornographic material, electronic or otherwise
- sexual and other forms of assault, exploitation, harassment, or abuse
- sexual immorality or any form of interpersonal sexual activity conducted outside of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage
- any criminal activity

Such conduct on the part of a seminary student is just cause for disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal. It should be understood, however, that this statement of expectations will not be used to create or maintain a climate characterized by inordinate intrusion, suspicion, or gossip. Briercrest Seminary is committed to pursuing disciplinary action in an atmosphere of trust, mutual accountability and with an aim to responsible restoration and reconciliation. In this light, seminary students are invited to disclose significant violations of the student covenant to seminary faculty members and leadership for the purpose of initiating a process of spiritual care and restorative discipline.

Since on-campus seminary students live in community with students of other Briercrest schools, seminary students should have a special sensitivity to the unique student life policies under which college and high school students live. As older brothers and sisters, seminary students will respect and protect the integrity of others who live with a different set of community expectations. For example, in cases where seminary students live in college or high school residences, they will be expected to abide by the residence life policies where they live, even if they are more stringent than the seminary student life covenant itself.