

Grievance Policy

Dealing with Grievances

- *For Pastoral Team Members(PT) and Lay Leaders*
- *For staff (excluding PT), church members and regular attendees*

1. What is a grievance?

1.1 Grievance is any type of –

- (a) allegation of unacceptable behaviour by people with the conduct of discrimination, harassment, bullying, emotional abuse, physical abuse and spiritual abuse.
- (b) complaint, problem or concern that is service or work related in which the decision or behaviour makes a person feel as if one has been unfairly, unjustly treated or upsetting.

2. Context of Policy

- 2.2 CCC expects all persons who hold positions of leadership to exercise the authority that comes with such positions in a manner which is godly and reflects best practice. The exercising of God's love is also expected to be amongst brother and sisters in Christ when dealing with each other within but not limited to the CCC community.
- 2.3 However CCC recognises the potential for persons in positions of leadership to exercise authority in an unacceptable way and the possibilities that amongst persons at CCC, although trying their best to exercise godliness, may hold grievance against another person.
- 2.4 The unacceptable exercise of authority or grievance has the potential, if not adequately addressed, to cause significant damage to relationships, undermine ministry and ultimately bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus into disrepute.
- 2.5 CCC is therefore committed to ensuring that the potential for this unacceptable exercise of authority and/or grievance is acknowledged and allegations and complaints are dealt with properly.
- 2.6 An important part of achieving this end is to provide a process by which persons can come forward with grievance in the knowledge that such allegations/complaints will be treated seriously and sensitively and dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively.
- 2.7 In making provision for this process, CCC wishes to affirm that faithful Christian leadership sometimes involves PT or Lay Leaders making decisions and taking other action with which some people disagree and which may, on occasions, even offend some people. Such Christian leadership is a necessary part of growing CCC and of itself should not give rise to any grievance under this policy.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 To promote an opportunity for persons to deal with grievance in a godly manner encouraging repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and the need to seek and respond to God's wisdom.
- 3.2 To ensure that the appropriate course of action is followed in order to facilitate a prompt, fair, confidential and effective resolution of grievances within the Sydney CCC community in a supportive and sensible manner according to scripture.

4. Scope and Application of Policy

- 4.1 This Grievance Policy applies to the CCC –
 - (a) Pastoral Team (PT) and Lay Leaders in the Board of Elders (BOE) and the Board of Deacons (BOD)
 - (b) Staff (paid employees)
 - (c) Registered Church Members, regular attendees and volunteers.
- 4.2 Allegations of sexual abuse, child abuse or allegations which may involve criminal conduct or professional misconduct should be referred to the Senior Minister and the Chairman of BOE who will report such conduct to the police and/or relevant professional associations.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 Complainant – is the person who has brought a grievance against another person.
- 5.2 Respondent – is the person whom a grievance has been brought against.
- 5.3 Regular attendees – are people who attend CCC services, events and activities regularly; but is not a registered church member of CCC.
- 5.4 Registered Church Members – are those who have been registered on the master membership list of CCC as a full member excluding the associate members.
- 5.5 Staff – are paid employees of CCC excluding the PT.

6. Policy Principles

- 6.1 A person who has a grievance or is concerned that a member of the leadership has engaged in unacceptable behaviour should raise their concerns as early as possible.
- 6.2 As raising such a concern may be a difficult step to take, the person may first want to seek advice from a mature and wise Christian friend on a confidential basis.
- 6.3 Grievances should be dealt with as close as possible to their source. This may be modified due to the nature of the grievance or the identity of the person about whom the grievance is made.
- 6.4 Anonymous grievances made by a person who does not want to be identified cannot be dealt with under any procedure which gives effect to this policy.
- 6.5 Grievances should be treated seriously and sensitively and dealt with promptly, having due regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.
- 6.6 Procedural fairness includes the right to be heard, the right to be treated without bias, the right to be informed of the grievances being made and to be provided with an opportunity to respond to them. It also includes the right to find out about progress in dealing with the grievances.
- 6.7 Both parties to a grievance should receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the matter. This will usually include providing both with a copy of this policy document and allowing both to be accompanied by a support person during any meeting or interview. However a support person may not speak at any meeting or interview unless invited to do so by the conciliator in order to facilitate the process.
- 6.8 This policy and procedure is intended to be a non-legal alternative for dealing with grievance. It should only be used where both parties agree to use the procedure voluntarily on the basis that legal

representation is excluded and that the matters discussed during the resolution process are confidential.

- 6.9 Wherever possible, grievances should be dealt with by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation consistent with biblical principles. The aim is to reach a mutually acceptance outcome that is both fair and effective and which minimises the potential for on-going damage to relationships and enables the ministry of CCC to continue effectively.
- 6.9 Sometimes an act of reparation, such as an apology, may be needed from the person about whom the grievance is made in order to resolve the matter in a meaningful way.
- 6.10 Both parties are to participate in the resolution process in good faith. A breach of this principle will be viewed seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 6.11 No person is to be victimised because they make a grievance or are associated with an allegation or a person making an allegation. A breach of this principle will be viewed seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 6.12 Frivolous, malicious or false allegations/complaints are not to be made. A breach of this principle will be viewed seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

7. Procedures

- 7.1 An overview and details of the procedure that should be followed for dealing with grievances under this policy are set out as an independent document.
- 7.2 Different sets of procedures should be provided for dealing with allegations of unacceptable behaviour, which is of a more serious nature, and for dealing with complaints which are of a lesser impact.
- 7.3 The procedure should be applied in a way which gives effect to the purpose and principles of this policy.
- 7.4 If the person responsible for dealing with a grievance considers that, in a particular case, strict compliance with the procedures will not give effect to the purpose and principles of this policy, the procedure should be modified to achieve these ends with the agreement of both parties to the grievance.
- 7.5 The procedure may also be modified if the person responsible for dealing with a grievance considers they have a conflict of interest in exercising this role.
- 7.6 In other cases, while strict compliance with the procedures is encouraged, a failure to do so will not invalidate any outcome under the procedures provided the purpose and principles of this policy are substantially met.

8. Implementation

- 8.1 In order to ensure that this policy and procedures is effectively implemented, CCC expects that it will be made generally available.
- 8.2 CCC also expects that, as far as possible, appropriate training will be made available to persons who are responsible for dealing with grievances under the procedure.