



# SUTTON COLDFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

*Making Sense of Life Together, Sharing the Love of Jesus*

## Complaints Procedure

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Published policies and procedures do not form part of any contract of employment

Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church  
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Registered Charity Number 1199202

Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales and operates as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

# Introduction

Our aim is to provide high-quality activities, programmes, services and support which meet your needs and surpass your expectations. After all, without your support, we would not be able to continue to carry out the work we do, often dramatically changing people's lives.

We set ourselves high standards but, being human, we know there will be times when we fall short of those high standards. When we do, we want you to be free to tell us (hopefully before you tell everyone else) and give us a chance to put things right and learn lessons for the future.

If you are not happy with us, please begin by contacting the relevant staff member, leader or an Elder. If you are not happy with an individual, it's usually best to tell him or her directly in a supportive and polite manner.

If you are not able to do this or you feel it's inappropriate, contact a member of the church's Leadership Team or an Elder. If your initial contact fails to resolve the issue, then we want you to be free to escalate the matter by contacting us at a higher level.

We will take your complaint seriously and see it as an opportunity to develop. Therefore, we are glad to hear from people who are willing to take the time to tell us where they feel we have let them down.

Please feel free to write to us with your comments and your concerns.

# Guidance on making a complaint

It is helpful if a complaint is made in writing and includes the following:

- The actions you are complaining about
- When they took place
- Why you think the actions are wrong
- Details of what you have done to try and resolve your concerns
- What you consider would resolve your concerns
- Details of who else you have reported the matter to
- Any additional information
- Confirmation that you are happy for detail of your complaint and the supporting documentation to be provided to those who have made the decisions in question.

## What counts as a complaint?

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about an action, or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church.

When the complaint is made by someone who is deployed within the church whether paid (for instance, paid youth workers and administrators) or holding unremunerated office (for instance, Sunday school leaders, servers), it is usually referred to as a grievance.

If a complaint or grievance relates to or includes an allegation that a child or adult who may be vulnerable has been harmed or is at risk of harm, or that an adult or another child may have caused harm to a child or adult who may be vulnerable, it must be responded to through the church's safeguarding procedures.

# Our Response

## How long will our response be if you write to us?

We will acknowledge your contact within 3 working days or receipt, and we will tell you who is dealing with your complaint. We aim to get a detailed response to you within 10 working days. If it takes longer than this, for example if we need to conduct an investigation, we will let you know.

## What will we do?

We will work hard to find out what has happened, and if something went wrong we'll aim to fix the problem and address your concerns. When you contact us, please feel free to offer your own suggestions on how you feel it can be resolved. We will always treat you with courtesy and respect, listen to what you say, and keep you informed of progress. We will advise you of your options if you want to take it to the next stage.

## What if I'm still not satisfied?

Our Trustees will consider the complaint if you are not happy with the initial response, or if it is deemed complex and needs an in depth investigation. If you are not happy with the outcome of this, you may appeal to a specially convened panel of former Elders of the church may consider the matter. This is not a legal process, but it is a genuine and serious attempt to ensure that all complaints are given the attention they deserve. Your appeal should set out:

- Your grounds of appeal; and
- What you consider would resolve your concerns.

## What we won't or can't do

We can't engage in lengthy debates on issues that are not directly related to our work or mission. We won't reply to complaints that are abusive, prejudiced, offensive, or illegible. Where a complaint is made anonymously, clearly, we can't reply to it, but we will investigate the complaint to see what lessons can be learned.

## Our pledge

We treat all complaints seriously and see them as an opportunity to improve what we do and the way we do it. We are happy to acknowledge mistakes that we make, sincerely apologise for them and try to prevent them happening again.

## How we will investigate a complaint

The person investigating will seek to:

- Establish what has happened and when it happened and who else was involved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if there is a need for clarification regarding the complaint or further information is required.
- If following the initial information and any discussions with the complainant the investigation is to proceed, the investigator will inform those who have been complained about of the nature of the allegations made (unless in the opinion of the investigator this would prejudice the investigation interview).
- Interview those involved and those complained about where necessary to understand their account of events.
- Keep notes of all investigatory interviews.

## Further Action

The complainant and those complained about will receive feedback from the investigating officer in line with the timescales noted above. This will include a statement as to whether, in the mind of the investigating officer and where relevant the Trustees, the complaint is upheld and the reasons for this.

If the investigation highlights areas for improvement, these will be stated and actions will be taken by the relevant leaders.

As a result of an investigation into a complaint, it may be necessary to address the matter through the disciplinary procedure.