

ICCM Complaints Policy

1st June 2020

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines and procedure for dealing with complaints so they are investigated in a fair and timely manner with a process that facilitates resolution of grievances wherever possible.

2. Complaints Procedure

The following procedure must be adhered to in order for complaints to be investigated.

Stage 1 – Informal

In the first instance, we would ask the complainant to present the grievance to the party involved, following principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17: *"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along..."* The aim is to resolve the issue informally. If it is not appropriate to meet with the person, the complainant may contact a trustee or member of the appropriate leadership team in order to obtain assistance. If the complainant has already discussed the matter with the party involved and felt it was ineffective in resolving the grievance, it may be decided that mediation is necessary and a meeting will be arranged that includes the complainant, the person being complained about and one or two others (staff member/elder/senior member of the church or trustee). All reasonable efforts to resolve the matter should be made at this stage which include meetings, phone calls, etc.

If after this stage the complainant still feels unresolved, they may proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal

All formal complaints need to be made in writing and presented to the Board of Trustees via email at admin@iccmisions.org. Such complaints will normally only be considered if good faith efforts have been made to directly resolve the matter as per Stage 1. Consequently, the Board of Trustees will not normally consider anonymous complaints.

The written complaint must include the following:

- The name of the person being complained about;
- Details surrounding the event, including where and when the event took place and who was involved or witnessed the event;
- The names of anyone who is aware of the issue;
- Details of what has been done to try and resolve the issue;
- What would be considered resolution on the part of the complainant;
- Any other relevant additional information that would be helpful in facilitating resolution.

A written response will then be sent to the complainant acknowledging receipt and outlining the steps that will be taken to investigate and facilitate resolution and the time scales

involved. After the investigation is completed, the complainant will be notified and informed regarding the plans for resolution. Decisions made by the Trustees at this stage are final.

If after this stage the complainant is still not satisfied, they have the option of presenting their case to an external agency outlined in Stage 3.

Stage 3 - External

In some instances, it may be deemed necessary to contact the legal authorities, HMRC or child protection authorities, etc. or some other authorities outside the body of the church.

If the case warrants further investigation, the complainant may choose to contact the Charity Commission as follows: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>. They will only intervene in matters where there is serious risk of significant harm to, or abuse of charities, their beneficiaries or assets. They will assess whether there is a regulatory issue or concern that requires its involvement.

3. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees. If a complaint is presented against a Trustee, the Chair would oversee. If a complaint is presented against the Chair, then another Trustee would be appointed by the Board to investigate. Written records will be kept by the Board of Trustees logging complaints presented.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to ensure that all relevant staff members are informed of the policy and procedures and necessary training and support are provided to facilitate resolution of grievances. Staff will be notified of any changes made to the policy.

4. Vexatious Complaints

A vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted.

The initial presumption for any complaint should be that it has been made in good faith. In the rare occasion where a complainant has established a pattern of vexatious complaints despite multiple reasonable attempts to resolve the issues raised, the Trustees reserve the right to declare a complainant to be vexatious.

In such circumstances, a new complaint from a vexatious complainant will only be actively pursued if there is an obvious and compelling reason to believe that there is a new matter of substance to be addressed. Otherwise the complaint will be considered to be vexatious and not pursued or responded to.

A decision to consider a complainant vexatious will be made by the chair of the Board of Trustees. If the chair should reasonably be expected to be recused from such a decision, it will be delegated to a group of three Trustees.

5. Disclosure and Confidentiality

To the extent reasonably possible, all matters will be treated with the greatest care to protect confidentiality of all parties involved. However, in some instances this may not be possible. In addition, personal data will be treated in accordance with the ICCM Privacy Notice.