

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

*As a Christian organisation, we consider this to be a highly important procedure. However, we also hope it will seldom be required. Before raising a formal concern through this procedure, we would expect and encourage you to seek resolution direct from those involved. Where possible, in the first instance, please contact the member of church staff involved and provide them with the opportunity to resolve your concerns.*

*You may also address any concerns with the church's pastors whose leadership responsibilities include managing the church's staff. If your concerns relate to one particular pastor, you may prefer to contact one of the other church pastors.*

### **1. ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE**

- 1.1 Streatham Central Church ("We" or "the Church") is committed to conducting Christian ministry with honesty and integrity and we expect all Church staff to maintain high standards. On very rare occasions, the conduct of the Church staff may fall short of this expectation.
  - (a) In the first instance, we would expect and encourage those affected, to speak directly with the member of staff involved and they should be provided with the opportunity to resolve any concerns on an informal basis. Unresolved concerns may then be taken to the church's pastors.. In the vast majority of situations, we hope concerns will be fully resolved at this stage, perhaps by staff providing further clarification or explanation, or by apologising and making amends. Where concerns are satisfactorily dealt with by the staff involved, the following procedure will not usually be required.
  - (b) Where concerns are not dealt with satisfactorily by the staff involved, or are of such a serious nature that further contact with those staff would be inappropriate or lead to harm, the following procedure should be followed.
- 1.2 This procedure may be used by anyone (whether or not a member of the Church) who wishes to complain about the conduct of any of the Church staff. In this procedure, "staff" means any employee, worker, trustee, pastor/elder or consultant of the Church.
- 1.3 This procedure should not be used by the Church's employees. If any employee wishes to complain about the conduct of another employee, they should use the Grievance Procedure as set out in the Church's Staff Handbook.
- 1.4 This procedure should not be used where there is a safeguarding concern involving the Church's staff. In such instances, the concerns should be reported in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy. If there is uncertainty as to whether something constitutes a safeguarding concern, Penny Duckworth should be contacted in the first instance: [penny@streathamchurch.com](mailto:penny@streathamchurch.com)
- 1.5 Concerns should be reported as soon as possible so that they can be investigated promptly. We will always conduct an investigation into any such reports.

- 1.6 If you have any questions about this process please contact the Chair of Trustees, Penny Duckworth by email: [penny@streathamchurch.com](mailto:penny@streathamchurch.com) or by phone +44 7724 636316

## **2. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**

- 2.1 This procedure should be used to report complaints about any of the Church staff. We take all complaints extremely seriously. Examples (not exhaustive) of where it would be appropriate to use this procedure are: bullying behaviour, coercion, manipulation, dishonesty, inappropriate sexual behaviour, criminal activity, and bribery.
- 2.2 Complaints should be submitted in writing (by post or email) to Penny Duckworth, 12 St Anselms Court, Madeira Road, SW16 2DD or [penny@streathamchurch.com](mailto:penny@streathamchurch.com) and you should clearly state that you want your complaint handled under the Complaints Procedure.
- 2.3 The complaint should set out:
- (a) Your contact details;
  - (b) Whether or not you are a current or former member of the Church;
  - (c) A brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved.

In some situations we may ask you to provide further information

- 2.4 We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your written complaint within 14 days of receipt.
- 2.5 All reports will be processed in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 3.1 All complaints submitted under this procedure will be handled sensitively. We hope that you will feel able to voice concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern. Please notify us if you wish your concerns to be investigated confidentially in this way.

### **4. INVESTIGATIONS**

- 4.1 All complaints and concerns raised under this procedure are taken seriously and they will all be investigated, as long as you provide us with your contact details so that we can request further information from you (where necessary) and so that we can send you the outcome of the investigation. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. You will usually be invited to a meeting to discuss the nature of your complaint.
- 4.2 You will be expected to co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.
- 4.3 Following an assessment of the facts, a decision will be taken as to whether the matter can be dealt with internally or whether it is necessary to refer the matter to a third party for investigation, such as to an independent Christian organisation, the local authority or the police.

### **5. THE OUTCOME**

- 5.1 We will endeavour to resolve your complaint as promptly as we can, but if it gives rise to serious issues we may need to take time in order to conduct a thorough investigation.
- 5.2 You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible.

### **6. REVIEW**

- 6.1 If the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may request a review of the decision.
- 6.2 Requests for a review should be submitted in writing to Penny Duckworth (see contact details above) within 14 days of the date on which the outcome of the investigation was sent or given to you.
- 6.3 The review will be dealt with impartially by a member of the Church staff (usually a senior employee, church pastor or trustee) not involved in the

previous investigation where possible (although they may ask anyone previously involved to contribute to their review of the previous decision).

- 6.4 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within four weeks of your submission of your request for a review. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right of review.
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