

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Castle Hill Baptist Church (hereafter, 'the church') views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person/organisation that has made the complaint.
- 1.2 Wherever possible, the church would prefer to follow Scriptural principles of reconciling differences. However, on occasion, attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. A formal complaints process is available for such cases.

2. Our policy

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at Castle Hill Baptist Church knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
- To appoint a trustee to oversee the implementation and review of this policy.

3. Who can make a complaint?

- 3.1 Anyone who believes they have reasonable grounds to make a complaint and has been either unable to resolve this informally, or believe it would not be appropriate to do so. You do not have to be a Member of the church to make a complaint.

4. What kind of complaint can I make?

- 4.1 Any safeguarding concern should be reported directly to the church's Safeguarding Team by calling 01926 754055, option 2, or by speaking directly with the Designated Person for Safeguarding or their Deputy.
- 4.2 You can make a complaint about:
 - The services that the church provides — for example, toddler groups, foodbanks, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Poor service might include dirty facilities or the trustees failing to carry out fire extinguisher tests or other health & safety requirements.
 - The behaviour of a church employee, trustee or volunteer that has affected you or someone for whom you are responsible — for example, inappropriate language or behaviour; persistent late payment of bills; sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.
 - The application of church policies and procedures, or decisions made by the church, that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible — for example, the church withdrawing financial support for a community group.

- 4.3 There is a separate complaints procedure for any complaints about the conduct or service of an accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor that might be deemed misconduct or gross misconduct.¹ In the first instance, follow the below procedure (5.1) and the Appointed Person will be able to assess and inform you if anything further is required.

5. How do I make a complaint?

- 5.1 You should submit your complaint in writing either by using the church's online complaints form <https://warwickbaptists.org.uk/complaint> or by requesting a paper form from the office / downloading it from our resources page (See Appendix A).
- 5.2 Upon completion of a paper form, this should be given to the church Secretary or a deacon who will ensure it gets to the Appointed Person.

6. How will the church deal with my complaint?

- 6.1 On receipt of your complaint, the church, acting through its charity trustees, will use the following procedure (Appendix B offers a guide sheet for the Appointed Person):
- Acknowledge your complaint and tell you who will review it (within 7 days of receipt).
 - Begin the review, contacting you for further information if needed: finding out what happened, when it happened, and who was involved, and if necessary, interviewing people involved (this process will begin within 14 days).
 - Communicate with the person who is the subject of the complaint about the nature of the complaint, unless this would seriously prejudice the review.
 - Discern what remedial action, if any, should be taken, giving reasons. Review these recommendations with a second party before action is taken.
 - Write to you informing you of the outcome of the review.
- 6.2 The church may, on occasion, receive related complaints, or several people may make the same complaint. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and when each complaint is received, the trustees may decide to consolidate the review or to deal with the earliest complaint first.
- 6.3 The more complex the complaint is, the longer it may take the church to respond. This is especially likely if the complaint relates to historic matters, or several people need to be interviewed. Please understand that if the police investigate the person who is the subject of the complaint in relation to the same or related matters, the church may not be able to begin or complete the review until the police have completed their investigations.
- 6.4 Please be aware that the church may decide that it is under a duty to report the matter to statutory authorities or the Charity Commission. If this is the case, the church will write to you to tell you this.
- 6.5 The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with the church's data protection policy.² However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of the complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice, and consequently the church cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential. You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice, if required.

¹ https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx

² <https://warwickbaptists.org.uk/data-protection-policy/>

Once you have submitted your complaint and while the matter is being reviewed, you should avoid communicating with the person(s) named in this complaint.

7. What if I am not happy with how the church deals with my complaint?

- 7.1 Please write to the deacons stating that you want to appeal and the grounds for your appeal. The church leadership will determine if another member of the leadership team and / or an independent Association Regional Minister can review your appeal, and if so, how long it will take for that person to review your appeal. If the church is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, the deacons will let you know, and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission.
- 7.2 An appeal should not include new evidence unless you could not with reasonable diligence have provided that evidence when you first complained.

8. Vexatious complaints

- 8.1 If the church concludes that your complaint is vexatious and you are a church member, the church may consider exercising church discipline. If you are not a church member, the church may not answer any further complaints you make.

Approved by: Church Meeting

Date adopted: 26/10/23

Date of next review: October 2026

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE COMPLAINTS FORM



Complaints Form

Castle Hill Baptist Church
Castle Hill
Warwick
CV34 4EX

01926 459640 (redirect service)

Your Details

Name:
Address:
Email:
Phone number:

Details of Your Complaint

Date (s)
Person (s)
Complaint about: <i>Briefly describe the nature of your complaint.</i>
Supporting information: <i>State the matter or name of the person who is the subject of the complaint, what happened, when and where. Provide the contact details or statements of any witnesses. Include any additional information that you think would be helpful. If complaining about a decision, explain what the decision was about, when it was taken, and who made it. Explain what impact this decision has had, or you may fear will have, and upon whom. Provide any additional information that you believe would be helpful.</i>

Have you tried to resolve this matter informally? Yes No

If "no" explain briefly why you decided not to try to resolve the matter informally.

If you tried to resolve this matter informally, what happened?

State who you dealt with, when and where, what information you provided to them, and what you felt was unsatisfactory about the outcome.

Action sought: *Describe what actions you want the church to take. While the charity trustees cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are seeking.*

Data Statement

The church will treat your data carefully and in accordance with the church's Data Protection Policy. The church cannot guarantee to keep the facts and details of your complaint confidential if it is necessary and proportionate to share your data in order to review and resolve your complaint.

I acknowledge that the information I've given is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge. I accept the data statement above and understand my right to appeal.

Signed:

Date complaint submitted:

APPENDIX B: GUIDE FOR PERSON REVIEWING A COMPLAINT

GUIDE FOR REVIEWING A COMPLAINT:

This list is here to help you to put into practise our policy, particularly ensuring we meet our agreed timeframes around communication. You can note this information below or elsewhere, as long as it is clear for someone else to understand should a review be necessary at a later date.

- **Date the complaint is received:**
- **Name of person processing complaint:**
- **Date acknowledgement is sent to the complainee (within 7 days of the date above)?**
- **Date investigation started (within 14 days) and people involved were informed?**
- **Date an update is given to the complainee (within 14 days)?**
- **Who was the second person who reviewed the decision / date:**

REVIEW:

- **What learning, if any, do we need to take from this situation?**
- **When was the final written report sent to the complainee?**
- **Who else needs to be informed, by whom, and when will this be done?**
- **Date all tasks are complete and the complaint is closed OR is the complaint in need of further work? Please add continuing record below if matter is continuing / escalated**
- **All relevant paperwork filed securely on G-Drive and paper versions destroyed?**