

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1.0 DEFINITIONS**

1.1 "The Diocese" refers to the Diocese of Salford including its constituent Parishes and Partnerships

### **2.0 SCOPE**

2.1 This Policy covers complaints from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in the Diocese

2.2 The Diocesan Complaints Policy is consistent with the social and moral teaching of the Church, and is written in the hope and intention of the Trustees of the Diocese to serve the people of the Diocese and thereby further the advancement of the Roman Catholic Faith

### **3.0 PURPOSE**

3.1 The Diocese views complaints as an opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint, as well as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future

The Diocese has adopted this Complaints Policy in order to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- ensure that complaints are resolved and, wherever possible, that relationships are repaired
- gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **4.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

4.1 The Diocese is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain

### **5.0 DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Diocese

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## 6.0 **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. For this reason, we ask that personal contact details accompany the complaint. In the absence of personal contact details the Bishop, who may delegate to the Moderator of The Curia of the Diocese, or the Chief Operating Officer will determine whether or not the complaint warrants an investigation

## 7.0 **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements

## 8.0 **RESPONSIBILITY**

Overall responsibility for this Policy and Procedure and its implementation lies with the Diocesan Trustees

## 9.0 **EXTERNAL STAGE**

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities>

## 10.0 **VARIATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Diocesan Trustees may vary the Complaints Policy and Procedure for good reason if particular circumstances so require. In exercising this discretion the Diocesan Trustees will at all times act reasonably and in good faith

## 11.0 **MONITORING AND LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS**

Complaints are reviewed annually by the Diocesan Trustees to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action

The Diocese reserves the right to amend this Policy at its discretion

## 12.0 **HOW TO COMPLAIN**

12.1 The complaint should be made in writing or by email. We will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete the complaints procedure. This may include providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint, or holding meetings in accessible locations

- 12.2 Complaints relating to Diocesan Clergy or the Chief Operating Officer should be addressed to The Bishop of Salford, the bishop may delegate this as appropriate to the Moderator of The Curia. Complaints should be addressed to:

The Bishop of Salford  
Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford, M3 6DP

Email: [bishopofsalford@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:bishopofsalford@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

- 12.3 Complaints about an employee or a volunteer of the Diocese, or about the service provided by a Diocesan Department should be addressed to:

Pauline Morgan  
Chief Operating Officer  
Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford, M3 6DP

Email: [pauline.morgan@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:pauline.morgan@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

- 12.4 This procedure does not relate to situations involving safeguarding of children and adults at risk of harm. They should be referred directly to the Diocese Safeguarding Office at Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford Street, Salford, M3 6DP

Email: [safeguarding@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dioceseofsalford.org.uk)

- 12.5 If the complaint relates to Parish based employees or volunteers they should wherever possible be referred directly to the local Parish Priest in the first instance for resolution

- 12.6 The complainant is reminded to respect confidentiality at all times and to refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media

### 13.0 **RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

- 13.1 If a complaint is sent directly to the Bishop, the Moderator of The Curia or the Chief Operating Officer, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate. The investigator's role will be to establish the facts relevant to the complaint, carry out consideration of the complaint and prepare a report for the Moderator of The Curia or Chief Operating Officer which sets out the salient facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems

- 13.2 If the complaint relates to a specific person, we will be obliged to share the complaint with the person concerned and may disclose the name of the person making the complaint. The individual complained about will be kept informed

of the progress of the investigation and they will be given an opportunity to respond.

- 13.3 Receipt of complaints will be acknowledged in writing or by email within a week. The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints Policy and Procedure will be attached
- 13.4 On receipt of the investigation report the Bishop, the Moderator of The Curia or Chief Operating Officer will make a decision as to whether or not the complaint is upheld. Ideally complainants will receive a definitive reply within 28 days of lodging the complaint. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given
- 13.5 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint

#### 14.0 **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

- 14.1 If the complainant feels the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Trustee level.  
This appeal should be addressed to:  
The Secretary to the Trustees  
Diocese of Salford (address as Above)
- 14.2 The request for Trustee level review will be acknowledged within a week of receipt. The acknowledgement will say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply
- 14.3 The person who is delegated to deal with the Appeal may regulate their own procedure but must investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint previously
- 14.4 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond
- 14.5 The person who investigated the original complaint will be kept informed of what is happening
- 14.6 Ideally, complainants who have appealed will receive a definitive reply within 28 days. If this is not possible (because, for example, an appeal investigation has not been fully completed), a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given
- 14.7 Whether the appeal complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint

14.8 The decision taken at this stage is final

**15.0 WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT**

15.1 If a complainant chooses to withdraw their complaint, at any stage of the process, they will be asked to confirm this in writing

**16.0 MANAGING SERIAL AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS**

16.1 The Diocese will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the organisation. However, the Diocese will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect Clergy, employees and volunteers from such behaviour, including any which is abusive, offensive or threatening

16.2 Complainants will be expected (to the extent appropriate) to limit their communication with the Diocese to that which relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed

16.3 If the behaviour continues the Bishop, the Moderator of The Curia or the Chief Operating Officer will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unacceptable. For complainants who excessively contact the Diocese causing a significant level of disruption, methods of communication may be specified and the amount of contact may be limited

**17.0 SERIOUS INCIDENT OF AGGRESSION OR VIOLENCE**

17.1 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence by any complainant we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from any premises of the Diocese

**Dated and Approved by the Diocesan Trustees:**

**May 2023**