



ENGADINE & HEATHCOTE ANGLICAN

Grievance Policy

Biblical Principles

In the Bible, God has much to say about the requirements and responsibilities of Christian life and leadership, especially when one has a grievance against another Christian.

- The Bible encourages us to speak directly with a person who is believed may be sinning (*Matthew 18:15-17*).
- Christians are to rightly honour those God has placed in positions of authority (*1 Timothy 5:17-20, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*).
- The Bible also expects high standards of Christian leaders (*Mark 10:42-45, 2 Timothy 2:14-26, Titus 1:5-9, James 3:1-2, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:2-3*).
- In the face of a grievance the priority of love and forgiveness must be our priorities (*Galatians 5:22-6:4, Colossians 3:12-14, James 1:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32*).

Purpose of Policy

To promote an opportunity for persons to deal with allegations of unacceptable behaviour by clergy or church workers in parishes of the Diocese of Sydney, in a godly manner encouraging reconciliation, repentance and the need to seek and respond to God's wisdom.

For the purpose of this policy, unacceptable behaviour means the following conduct in relation to an adult:

- Bullying;
- Emotional abuse;
- Harassment;
- Physical abuse; or
- Spiritual abuse

Allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse should be referred directly to the Director of Professional Standards (or a Contact Person appointed by the Director to receive such allegations). Such actions will be dealt with under the "Discipline Ordinance 2006".

Allegations which may involve criminal conduct or professional misconduct should also be referred to the Director of Professional Standards. The Director will report such conduct to the police or relevant professional association as applicable.

This policy is intended to complement "Faithfulness in Service", and should be read in light of the standards and guidelines in that code.

Procedure

The procedure should be applied in a way which gives effect to the purpose and principles of this policy. If the person responsible for dealing with an allegation considers that in a particular case, strict compliance with the procedures will not give effect to the purpose and principles of this policy, the procedures should be modified to achieve these ends with the agreement of both parties to the allegation.

The procedure may also be modified if the person responsible for dealing with an allegation considers they have a conflict of interest in exercising this role.

In other cases, while strict compliance with the procedure is encouraged, a failure to do so will not invalidate any outcome under the procedure provided the purpose and principles of this policy are substantially met.

Definitions

Bullying

The repeated seeking out or targeting of a person to cause them distress and humiliation, or to exploit them. It includes:

- Exclusion from a peer group;
- Intimidation;
- Extortion; and
- Coercive behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Acts or omissions that have caused, or could cause, emotional harm or lead to serious behavioural or cognitive disorders. It includes:

- Subjecting a person to excessive and repeated personal criticism;
- Ridiculing a person, including the use of insulting or derogatory terms to refer to them;
- Threatening or intimidating a person;
- Ignoring a person openly and pointedly; and
- Behaving in a hostile manner or in any way that could reasonably result in another person feeling isolated or rejected.

Harassment

Unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, in relation to another person where the person feels with good reason offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. It includes:

- Making unwelcome physical contact with a person;
- Making gestures or using language that could reasonably give offence including continual and unwarranted shouting;
- Making unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's capacities or attitudes, including gossip;
- Making unwelcome communication with a person in any form (e.g. phone calls, email, text messages); and
- Stalking a person.

Physical abuse

Any intentional or reckless act, use of force, or threat to use force causing injury to, or involving unwelcome physical contact with, another person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. An injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It does not include lawful discipline by a parent or guardian.

Spiritual abuse

The mistreatment of a person by actions or threats when justified by appeal to God, faith, or religion. It includes:

- Using a position of spiritual authority to dominate or manipulate another person or group;
- Using a position of spiritual authority to seek inappropriate deference from others;
- Isolating a person from friends and family members; and
- Using biblical or religious terminology to justify abuse.

The procedures as outlined in Faithfulness in Service:

- **Appendix 2:** "Overview of procedure for dealing with allegations of unacceptable behaviour by a member of the clergy or church worker"; and
- **Appendix 3:** "Detail of procedure for dealing with allegations of unacceptable behaviour by clergy and church workers in parishes"

are to be followed in all cases.