

# ICBC COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date approved: July 2021

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## Rationale:

- To have a clear process for people who have a complaint about the actions or behaviour of a person representing ICBC in a voluntary or leadership role.
- To provide guidelines for people who have a concern about a person's behaviour within the context of ICBC activities.

## Clarification of Terms

- A ministry leader at ICBC is one of the staff employed by the church, who head up the 5 key areas of the church; Lead, Grow, Nurture (children, youth) Reach, Support
- A (team) leader is any person heading up a ministry or group within the church and has been appointed by a ministry leader. This could include a small group leader, intern, a leader of a ministry i.e. someone with a role in children's or youth ministry or a worship leader
- A volunteer is someone who has a designated role in a specific activity under the authority of a team leader or ministry leader.

**Note:** The process for lodging a complaint concerning sexual abuse or harassment is different from that of a general complaint.

## Privacy (concerning both general and sexual abuse complaints)

- As far as is practical, the privacy of the complainant and the person complained against will be upheld. The nature of the complaint and details will only be shared with those whom the elders deem necessary to know in order to both respect the privacy of the individuals involved and ensure the well-being of the church community.

## How to lodge a general complaint

1. Anyone who has a concern or complaint should approach a Ministry Leader first. If the complaint is against a Ministry Leader they should approach the Lead Pastor. If the complaint is against the Lead Pastor they should approach an Elder. If a complaint is against an Elder they should approach the Lead Pastor or another Elder.
2. Any concern or complaint will be listened to and the complainant given the opportunity to have the situation resolved.
3. Any person complained against has the right of reply.
4. An informal concern can be discussed with the appropriate person with the hope of finding a solution.
5. A formal complaint will be in writing and will receive a written response within 10 working days.
6. If a complainant is not satisfied with the way the situation has been resolved they can approach the Lead Pastor or Chair of the Elders.

## How to lodge a complaint of sexual harassment or abuse

ICBC believe that every person, including every child and young person, is entitled to be safe from sexual harassment and sexual abuse. We view this behaviour as totally unacceptable on the part of any of our Pastoral Leaders.

### **Making a Complaint**

ICBC has appointed a contact person to receive on behalf of the church, complaints/accusations/or reports of sexual offending made against any person(s) who is an elder, ministry leader, (team) leader or volunteer in the church's ministries. Cases of accusations of sexual offending by Ministry Leaders will also be advised to the leadership of the Baptist Union.

In the case of suspected or known abuse of children or young persons under 17 years, Oranga Tamariki, should be advised / involved immediately with any subsequent disciplinary action being addressed by the member church or organisation as a consequential issue.

### **Making Contact**

The church's contact person/s

1. Mrs Chris Broere

Phone: (03) 230 4742

2. Mr Clive McArthur

Phone: (03) 213 0011 or 027 254 9325

### **The Role of the Contact Person**

- Anyone with concerns or complaints of sexual harassment /abuse should feel free to approach the Church's contact person for advice and information ...i.e. any person who believes they have been sexually harassed or abused, or a person against whom allegations have been made.
- The role of the contact person(s) is to listen to what the inquirer has to say, and to provide information as to the options available to deal with the problem, and explain what each option will involve, so that the inquirer can make an informed decision as to their course of action.
- The wishes and feelings of the person making the inquiry will be respected.
- If the inquirer wishes only to talk and not take further action, that will be taken into account but if it becomes apparent that the safety of others is an issue then appropriate action will be taken.
- The Contact Person is responsible for contacting the Baptist National Centre and the church's lawyer.
- If necessary, appoint an Investigation Team in consultation with Sexual Misconduct Response Team Chair.

Note: The sexual misconduct response team are a team set up by the Baptist Union to advise and help with allegations of abuse.

### **See Complaints Appendix A for**

- **What constitutes harassment and abuse**
- **What a person making a complaint is entitled to**
- **What a person complained against is entitled to**

## **Complaints Appendix A**

### **What constitutes harassment and abuse?**

**HARASSMENT** means any unwelcome comment, conduct or gesture that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading or offensive. It might be repeated or an isolated incident but it is so significant that it adversely affects someone's performance, contribution or work environment. It can include physical, degrading or threatening behaviour, abuse of power, isolation, discrimination, sexual harassment and racial harassment.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT** is also prohibited. It includes any unwanted sexually related behaviour that, in the circumstances a reasonable person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by. Usually harassment and sexual harassment constitute an ongoing series of events, however legally, just one act can constitute harassment.

### **What a person making a complaint of sexual abuse or harassment is entitled to**

Persons making a complaint are entitled to;

- be treated with respect and have their complaint taken seriously and be acted upon as true, unless and until such time as it is clear the allegation is unfounded or untrue.
- all reasonable/necessary support including pastoral care, to help them through the process and to aid in their recovery from the effects of the harassment or abuse.
- be given a copy of the policy and or protocols of the Church (or Baptist Union Guidelines) covering sexual harassment/abuse or criminal offending.
- be kept safe from further harassment or abuse including any unnecessary further emotional or psychological trauma inconsistent with the need to investigate or deal with the complaint
- a prompt response to the allegation
- be fully advised of the options available to them
- be kept informed of the progress of the response or investigation
- have their views considered before their allegation is handed on to any outside agency.

### **What a person complained of sexual abuse or harassment against is entitled to:**

Every person complained against shall be entitled to...

- be dealt with in a manner that is fair and just, having regard to the circumstances, nature and seriousness of the complaint
- be informed at the earliest appropriate time, having regard to the circumstances, nature and seriousness of the complaint, and of the substances of the allegation against them
- be provided with an appropriate level of support

**For further details refer to the Baptist Union Protocols and Policies which Invercargill Central Baptist Church will abide with.**