

WALLAN GATEWAY CHURCH

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to detail how Wallan Gateway Church approaches complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction from stakeholders, staff and the general public. A complaint may include an allegation that a person has behaved in an unacceptable way. This policy applies to all Wallan Gateway Church staff, elders and volunteers.

2. PRINCIPLES

Wallan Gateway Church is committed to and will uphold the following principles in applying this policy:

Culture: Our aim is to serve our stakeholders to the best of our ability. We accept that sometimes people will have problems or concerns they wish to raise. We are willing to receive complaints as a means of identifying and understanding how we can do things better.

Principles: Our complaints and feedback system is modelled on biblical principles, including humility, fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration.

People: Our complaint handling staff will be skilled and professional.

Process: Our complaints handling process involves seven stages: acknowledgment, assessment, planning, investigation, response, review, and consideration of systemic issues.

Analysis: We review information about complaints as part of a continuous process of review and improvement.

3. OUTCOMES

Wallan Gateway Church seeks to ensure that all parties are aware of their obligations regarding complaints handling and will comply with this policy to ensure that complaints are handled in a professional and God-honouring way. This policy seeks to provide a fair complaints process which is clear and easy to use.

4. FUNCTIONS AND DELEGATIONS

Position	Delegation/Task
Senior Pastor	Oversight of Policy Framework / Policy Approval / Policy Compliance
Eldership	Policy Endorsement and Approval / Policy Compliance
Staff, Volunteers	Policy Compliance

5. POLICY DETAIL

The Culture We Promote

We are committed to achieving our Mission and Values, and to forwarding the message of Jesus Christ through our church. We are also committed to doing so in the best way possible, without undue concern or hurt for any of the people we deal with. We know that despite our best efforts, we are not perfect and that sometimes we could do better. Accordingly, we acknowledge that complaints can be necessary and recognise that effective complaint handling will benefit our stakeholders, our reputation and those we seek to serve. We affirm that complaints can highlight weaknesses in our programs, policies and activities, and stimulate us to improve what we do. We also affirm that good complaint handling will reassure stakeholders that we are committed to resolving problems, improving relations and building loyalty, and to improving our accountability and transparency.

Our Approach

Complaints will be handled either by the Safe Places Coordinator, a staff member, or elder. The person handling the complaint should not be personally involved in the issues. We may outsource complaint handling to an external consultant or adviser. Each complaint will be assessed on its own merits.

As far as possible confidentiality and privacy will be maintained. It is our aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf. If you have special needs relevant to your complaint (e.g., non-English speaking background), please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

You may initiate a complaint via email, letter or telephone call. In addition, both a secure Complaints and Feedback Box and Complaint Notification Forms are to be found situated in the church building to assist the process. Please find contact details noted at the end of this document. We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided. We are happy to deal directly with you, or through a parent, guardian, friend or adviser.

The Process We Undertake

Our standard complaint handling procedures are as follows:

1. We will acknowledge each complaint promptly and give you the contact details of the person handling the complaint, ideally within 3 business days. If we have not finalised your complaint within 14 days after that, we will contact you to report our progress.
2. We will assess the complaint and assign it priority.
3. If investigation is required, we will plan how the investigation is to be carried out.
4. We will investigate all relevant factual issues and then review the complaint considering those facts. We will then consider options for complaint resolution.
5. We will contact you to discuss the complaint. In doing so we will inform you of the relevant facts we have identified and ask you to comment and/or give us any other relevant information you may have. We will then discuss with you how we propose to resolve the complaint. If we were wrong or have acted inappropriately, we will seek to apologise.
6. If you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the most appropriate, senior church leader will review the position, and we will contact you appropriately. If you are still not satisfied, and we believe that there are genuine issues involved, we may suggest an externally facilitated mediation. Alternatively, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.
7. We will act on any systemic issues that are identified because of the complaint or feedback.
8. We reserve the right to approach the complaints process with some flexibility, if we think it will achieve a more just and/or efficient outcome. Any change to the process outlined above will be communicated once determined.

(Note – if we reasonably believe that a complaint is vexatious, trivial or ingenuine we will inform you accordingly as soon as we form that view. If you wish to take matters further, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.)

We Will Work to Continually Improve

We appreciate that complaints and negative feedback can provide an insight into our programs and services and may show that they are not working as well as they might. We will use information brought to light by any complaints and feedback to improve our service to our stakeholders by:

- highlighting service failings that need to be remedied; and
- revealing problems and trends that can be acted on by staff and volunteers.

We will address at staff and eldership levels any significant issues which are revealed by our complaints handling and feedback procedures.

Our Contact Details

Safe Places Coordinator

Wallan Gateway Church

T: (03) 5783 2777

E: admin@wallangateway.org.au

PO Box 569, Wallan Vic 3756

6. AUTHORISATION

Responsible person:	WGC Safe Church Coordinator
Document Source:	CCVT Final 1.0, approved 05.12.2019
WGC Version:	1.0
Approved Date:	25 th November, 2022
Scheduled review date:	October 2024

Approved by Wallan Gateway Church as from the date of signing.

Signatures Required:

Senior Pastor:  _____

Date: 25th November, 2022

Chair of Elders:  _____

Date: 25th November, 2022

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