



MCSI CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

This document is the Conflict Resolution and Grievance Policy of Melbourne CSI Church (MCSI).

Open communication and feedback are essential elements of a satisfying and productive volunteering and employment environment. No staff or volunteer will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilize this policy fairly to resolve an issue.

Conflict Resolution

Every attempt should be made to resolve conflicts between individuals internally and informally. If resolution cannot be obtained satisfactorily, Church Vestry will access support from the diocese and/or an external mediator where appropriate and in keeping with the Diocesan protocols.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

1. Conflicts are to be raised by the complainant in the first instance with the other person involved, and in the second instance with the Vicar or member of vestry to whom the other person reports, (in the case of the Vicar, their direct report is the Wardens) and every attempt made to resolve the conflict amicably and quickly, seeking to keep to the spirit of Matthew 18:15.
2. If resolution is not achieved, the issue is to be raised in writing with the Vicar.
3. If still not resolved, the matter is to be raised, in writing, with the Wardens.
4. Conflicts between Vestry members are to be raised with the Wardens.
5. If there is a conflict with the Vicar that cannot be resolved informally (and consistent with item 1 above), it should be raised, in writing, with the Wardens.
6. If a conflict cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the Wardens will arrange for mediators where appropriate.
7. If the mediation process does not result in the dispute being resolved, the final and binding decision of the dispute is taken by the General Body of the church in accordance with the MCSI Constitution.

Grievance Procedures

1. A grievance should be clearly described in writing to the Vicar. If the grievance concerns the Vicar, then it should be put in writing to the Wardens.
2. The Vicar or Wardens will interview the complainant to verify the complaint and determine if remedial action needs to be taken by establishing if the grievance concerns behaviour that:
 - a. is potentially dangerous;
 - b. could lead to significant financial loss;
 - c. shows deep disregard for those in authority;
 - d. shows deep disregard for the values of MCSI or the faithfulness in service code of behaviour;
 - e. displays errors fundamental to the proper performance of their work;
 - f. negatively affects other workers ability to properly perform their work.



3. If the grievance is established as not requiring remedial action, but is a matter of conflict between individuals, proceed as for a resolution of conflict to enable an amicable solution to be found.
4. If remedial action is necessary, make sure that the volunteer or employee is treated fairly and that the action taken is commensurate and relative to the matter in question.
5. Actions:
 - a. Determine the exact nature of the grievance.
 - b. If either the complainant or the other person is a member of staff, check the file of the employee(s) for pertinent information.
 - c. Speak to the person to ascertain their view of the matter in a private environment but heed duty of care considerations as to whether a second person should be present and clarify that person's role at the beginning of the interview.
 - d. Look for positive ways to resolve the issue and agree on a specific action plan.
 - e. Assess whether professional development or counselling opportunities would support the action plan.
 - f. Document what is said and agreed in writing.
 - g. Follow up the action plan.
 - h. The staff member/volunteer should have every opportunity to improve. In cases of serious or wilful misconduct that opportunity may be inappropriate.
 - i. Any action must be fair, documented and appropriate to the nature of the grievance. The documented material must be defensible if the actions were to be challenged.
6. If the Wardens determine that there is a case to answer in regard to the Vicar, they are to take the matter to the respective Bishop of the Diocese in Kerala for him to seek to resolve the issue.
7. In cases of alleged abuse, where mediation would not be appropriate, the Wardens will consult with the Bishop or their delegate and advise the complainant of their option to make a report to the Diocesan Bishop.

Availability of this policy

A current copy of this guideline is available on the MCSI website. A hard copy will be provided free of charge upon request.

Review of the policy

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the pastorate committee based on the feedback from the congregation.

Amendment review

If there are any concerns raised or feedback received on this version of the policy, the committee will facilitate the review process and amend the policy accordingly.



Date of last review: May 2023

Date policy last updated: November 2020

Date of next review: April 2025

Bibliography

Playgroup Australia Inc. National Operations Manual. Minter Ellison Consultants. Canberra 2006

Grievances and Dispute Resolution. Policy Bank www.ourcommunities.com.au

Parish Governance Act 2013: Part 8 - Resolution of Disputes