

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### 1. Purpose

Coastal Bible Church Ltd is committed to providing a safe, fair, effective, and efficient process for handling complaints and feedback.

This policy ensures that all staff, volunteers, contractors, members, and governing body representatives can raise concerns, and that people using Coastal Bible Church Ltd's services can do so with confidence that their issues will be addressed respectfully and promptly.

Complaints and compliments are valued as opportunities for learning and continuous improvement.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Employees, volunteers, and contractors of Coastal Bible Church Ltd
- Members of the governing body
- Service users, clients, and community members
- External stakeholders and the public

### 3. Policy Statement

Coastal Bible Church Ltd welcomes complaints as a means of improving our services and strengthening trust with the people and communities we serve.

We are committed to:

- Treating all complaints seriously, fairly, and confidentially
- Managing complaints promptly and transparently
- Ensuring no person is adversely affected for making a complaint
- Using complaint information to drive continuous improvement

The Board of Coastal Bible Church Ltd promotes a culture that values complaints and ensures effective resolution.

### 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Complaint</b>	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Coastal Bible Church Ltd, our services, staff, or complaint handling, where a response or resolution is expected or required. Includes complaints made on social media.
<b>Complaints Register</b>	A central record used to systematically document and track complaints for reporting and analysis.
<b>Dispute</b>	An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside the organisation.

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Term	Definition
<b>Feedback</b>	Opinions, comments, or expressions of concern made directly or indirectly, where a response is not expected.
<b>Grievance</b>	A formal written statement by an employee regarding another staff member or a work-related problem.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<b>Board of Directors</b>	Review complaints trends annually; oversee continuous improvement; approve policy updates.
<b>Management</b>	Implement this policy and ensure staff are trained in complaints handling.
<b>All Staff and Volunteers</b>	Respond to complaints respectfully and refer unresolved matters appropriately.
<b>Complaints Officer (if designated)</b>	Maintain the complaints register, monitor progress, and report outcomes.

## 6. Complaints Handling Procedure

Coastal Bible Church Ltd follows five key stages for managing complaints.

### Stage 1: Receive

- Record all complaints not resolved immediately in the **Complaints Register**, including:
  - Contact information of the complainant and date received
  - Issues raised and desired outcomes
  - Relevant supporting information
  - Any additional support required by the complainant
- Information about how to make a complaint will be accessible and easy to understand.
- Complainants will be:
  - Provided information about the complaints process
  - Treated with respect and involved where appropriate
  - Given reasons for decisions and any review options
- Anonymous complaints may be accepted if sufficient detail is provided.
- No person will be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint.
- Complainants may nominate a representative or advocate to act on their behalf.

### Stage 2: Acknowledge

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **5 working days**.
- Provide information about:
  - The complaints process
  - Expected time frames and progress updates
  - Any reasons for delay or inability to address certain matters
- Prioritise complaints based on urgency and seriousness.

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- If there is an immediate risk to safety or security, respond and escalate immediately.
- The staff member handling the complaint must not be the subject of the complaint.
- Manage conflicts of interest and protect complainant identity in accordance with privacy laws.

## Stage 3: Assess and Investigate

### Initial Assessment:

Determine whether the issue is within Coastal Bible Church Ltd's control and identify the outcomes sought. Consider:

- The seriousness and urgency of the matter
- Health and safety implications
- Impact on the complainant
- Risks of delay
- Whether external organisations are involved

### Investigation:

- Provide explanations or gather relevant information.
- Conduct investigations where appropriate.
- Keep the complainant informed of progress and outcomes.

## Stage 4: Determine Outcome and Provide Reasons

After investigation, Coastal Bible Church Ltd will communicate the outcome to the complainant, including:

- Findings and actions taken
- Reasons for the decision
- Any remedy or resolution offered
- Options for review (internal, external, or appeal)

## Stage 5: Close the Complaint and Continuous Improvement

- Update the **Complaints Register** with:
  - How the complaint was managed
  - The outcome (substantiated or not)
  - Any recommendations or follow-up actions

### Continuous Improvement:

- The Board will review the Complaints Register annually to identify trends and opportunities for improvement.
- This policy and procedure will be reviewed **biennially** (every two years).

## 7. Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Feedback and Grievance Procedure

## 8. References

- Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 – *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organizations*
- Relevant State and Federal Privacy and Consumer Protection Legislation