

Sidcup Baptist Church

Complaints Policy and Procedure



The Charity Trustees of Sidcup Baptist Church approved the following complaints policy and procedure on 6 October 2026.

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of the Sidcup Baptist Church complaints procedure is to provide a process for dealing with complaints relating to the behaviour of, or activities and decisions taken by, the church's staff, charity trustees, or volunteers.

Please note that there is a separate complaints procedure for complaints about a nationally accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor. That procedure is available at:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx.

You can find out if someone is a nationally accredited Baptist Minister by looking them up on the directory of nationally accredited Baptist Ministers at

<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/504943/Ministries.aspx>.

2. General Principles

Wherever possible the church would prefer to follow Scriptural principles of reconciling differences. However, on occasion attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. A formal complaints process is available for such cases.

3. Can I make a complaint?

Yes. You do not have to be a member of the church to make a complaint. If you believe you have reasonable grounds to make a complaint and you cannot resolve the issue informally or believe it would not be appropriate to do so, you can make a complaint.

4. What kind of complaint can I make using this procedure?

You can make a complaint about:

- The services that the church provides. For example, groups for children and adults, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Poor service might include dirty facilities or the trustees failing to carry out health & safety requirements such as fire extinguisher servicing.
- The behaviour of a church employee, trustee or volunteer that has affected you or someone for whom you are responsible. For example, inappropriate language or behaviour; persistent late payment of bills; sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.
- The application of church policies and procedures, or decisions made by the church, that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible. For example, the church

withdrawing financial support for a community group.

- How the church protects your data. The church's approach to data protection is set out in our [GDPR/Privacy policy](#), but the principles and procedures to be followed in the event of a complaint about handling of data are covered by this complaints policy and the procedures described below.

You should report any safeguarding concern to the church's safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead by emailing protection@sidcupbaptistchurch.org.uk.

5. What kind of complaints are not suitable for this procedure?

- *Safeguarding concerns relating to child or adult protection.* Any safeguarding concern should be reported to church's safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead by emailing protection@sidcupbaptistchurch.org.uk. This email address is monitored daily.
- *A complaint about the conduct or service of an accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor.*

This should be made following the procedure for accredited Baptist church workers:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx

- *An employment grievance.* The church has a staff grievance procedure which is set out in the employee's contract of employment. Employment-related grievances should be dealt with in accordance with that grievance procedure.

6. How do I make a complaint and how will the church deal with it?

You should submit your complaint in writing using the church's complaints form (see Appendix 1). This may be submitted electronically by email to secretary@sidcupbaptistchurch.org.uk, or by post addressed to the Church Secretary at the address given below. If you make your complaint verbally in the first instance (e.g. in person or by phone) we will ask you to confirm the details in writing using the complaints form. On receipt of your complaint, the church, acting through its charity trustees, will:

- Acknowledge your complaint and tell you who will review it, normally within 7 days of receipt. If your complaint is submitted by post, we would normally send the acknowledgement by post within 7 days of receipt unless you provide us with your email address;
- Within 14 days, begin the review, contacting you for further information if needed; finding out what happened, when it happened, and who was involved, and if necessary, interviewing people involved;
- If the complaint concerns one or more individuals, inform the person(s) who is(are) the subject of the complaint about the nature of the complaint unless this would seriously prejudice the review;
- Where appropriate, keep you informed of progress in carrying out the review;
- Recommend what remedial action, if any, should be taken, giving reasons;
- Write to you informing you of the outcome of the review.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of another person (particularly if this relates to data protection) we will ask you for evidence that you are authorised to act on the other person's behalf.

The church may, on occasion, receive related complaints, or several people may make the same complaint. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and when each complaint is received, the trustees may decide to consolidate the review or to deal with the earliest

complaint first.

The more complex the complaint is, the longer it may take the church to respond. This is especially likely if the complaint relates to historic matters or several people need to be interviewed. Please understand that if the police investigate the person who is the subject of the complaint in relation to the same or related matters, the church may not be able to begin or complete the review until the police have completed their investigations.

Please be aware that the church may decide that it is under a duty to report the matter to statutory authorities or the Charity Commission. If this is the case, the church will write to you to tell you this.

The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with the church's [GDPR/Privacy policy](#). However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of the complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice, and consequently the church cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential. You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required. Once you have submitted your complaint and while the matter is being reviewed, you should avoid communicating with the person complained about or discussing the matter with others.

7. What if I am not happy with how the church deals with my complaint?

You should write to the church secretary stating that you want to appeal and the grounds for your appeal. The church secretary will consult with the church leadership. It is our practice that if the church receives a complaint, at least one member of the leadership team exclude themselves from any part of the meeting that the complaint is discussed including any minutes, so that they can act as an Independent Person(s) in the event that an appeal is raised. The Independent Person(s) and the Regional Minister will review your appeal, and advise how long this is likely to take. If the church is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, it will as a first step refer to a London Baptists Regional Minister to see if they would be willing to hear the appeal. If this is not possible, then the church secretary will let you know, and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission.

An appeal should not include new evidence, unless you could not with reasonable diligence have provided that evidence when you first complained.

If you are unhappy with how the church deals with your complaint, you may choose to contact the Charity Commission, the regulator of charities (further information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>). The Charity Commission may consider serious concerns which fall within its regulatory remit, including serious harm or mismanagement, but it is not a general appeal body for individual complaints.

8. Vexatious Complaints

If the church concludes that your complaint is vexatious and you are a church member, the church may consider exercising church discipline. If you are not a church member, the church may not answer any further complaints you make.

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