

Archdiocese UK Grievance Procedure

(modified from the ACAS model procedure for small organisations)

St Anne's Orthodox Christian parish,

7 Cattlemarket Road, Northampton, NN1 1HL

1 Introduction

This grievance policy applies to all the parishes and communities of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe in the UK (hereinafter referred to as 'the Archdiocese UK'). It is of relevance to all within this parish, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

The aim of this Grievance Procedure is to settle grievances or complaints fairly and it is intended to operate simply and quickly. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made in order to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

When dealing with issues concerning abuse of trust, all employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese in the UK must remember that the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in Archdiocesan life is paramount, and that the Archdiocese in the UK also has a responsibility to ensure that volunteers and staff are treated fairly and with respect.

If an employee/volunteer /volunteer has a problem with any other member of the parish, and is unable to sort it out informally, the matter should be referred to the welfare officer of the parish. You may be able to agree an informal solution between you.

If the problem is serious or remains unresolved or the employee/volunteer /volunteer wishes to raise the matter formally, the employee/volunteer /volunteer can use the formal grievance procedure.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the start of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance.

2 The Procedure

Raise the grievance in writing:

1. The employee/volunteer should raise a grievance with the relevant welfare officer within the parish or community without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint.
2. The complaint should contain the following information:
 - a. Date:
 - b. Brief description of complaint
 - c. Name and contact details of the welfare officer to whom the complaint is addressed
 - d. Staff member/ volunteer against whom complaint has been made:
 - e. Name and contact number of any person providing support to the employee/volunteer

3. Where that person has not been appointed or is involved as a person within the grievance, the matter should be referred to another parish by the dean
4. Where another parish independent of the situation cannot be identified, or the dean or any hierarch is involved in the case, the matter to should be referred to a charitable body separate from the Archdiocese in the UK.
5. The employee/volunteer must detail in writing the specific circumstance or circumstances which constitute the grievance, with dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable.
6. Employee/volunteer should stick to the facts and avoid insulting or abusive language.

Invitation to a Grievance Meeting

7. The welfare officer will invite the employee/volunteer to attend a meeting, without unavoidable delay to discuss the matter.
8. The welfare officer will also state that the employee/volunteer is entitled to be accompanied by a representative or colleague at the meeting.
9. The employee/volunteer has a right to ask for a different person to chair the grievance meeting if they have grounds for any conflict of interest

Grievance Meeting

10. Where possible, a note-taker, who must be uninvolved in the case will take down a record of the proceedings.
11. The welfare officer or designated person under point 3 above will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the employee/volunteer's grievance, ask the employee/volunteer if they are correct and require the employee/volunteer to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear.
12. The employee/volunteer will be given the opportunity to put forward her/his case and say how they would like to see it resolved.
13. The employee/volunteer may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provided to the welfare officer).
14. The welfare officer may question the employee/volunteer and any of the employee/volunteer's witnesses.
15. The employee/volunteer /companion will be given the opportunity to sum up but may not introduce any new material.
16. The meeting may be adjourned by the welfare officer if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any necessary investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.
17. Having considered the grievance, the welfare officer will give her/his decision regarding the case in writing to the employee/volunteer which will normally be within five working days. If appropriate, the decision will set out what action the welfare officer intends to take to resolve the grievance or if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons. This will also include notifying the employee/volunteer of her/his right of appeal and the procedure to be followed.

Appeal

18. If still unresolved, the employee/volunteer may refer the matter, in writing, to the Archdiocesan Council or if the Council has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to the welfare officer or designated person within another Orthodox Christian diocese.

19. The employee/volunteer wishing to appeal against a grievance decision, must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the grievance decision, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached.
20. Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the secretary of the Archdiocesan Council who will ensure that a notetaker is present if possible. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay.
21. At least two members of the Archdiocesan Council, plus one member entirely separate from the Orthodox Church will constitute an Appeal Panel.
22. The persons hearing the appeal should, if at all possible, have had no direct involvement in the case.
23. The employee/volunteer is entitled to be accompanied by a representative or colleague at the meeting.
24. The employee/volunteer has a right to ask for a different person to chair the appeal meeting if they have grounds for any conflict of interest
25. The meeting may be adjourned by the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.
26. The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

Canonical tradition of the church

Where the grievance involves matters of the canonical tradition of the church, appropriate reference may be made to a recognised and mutually agreed expert in the canonical tradition to advise the welfare officer or appeal panel. This is advisory only and not binding on the parties involved. The law of the UK is binding on all parties.

Approved 18 March 2022

Very Reverend Dr Timothy Curtis, Rector