

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

Moortown Baptist Church needs a complaints process because humans are imperfect; it is inevitable that the church will be the subject of a level of complaints. The Church is made up of people, and so is a fallible community; its members on occasion behave in ways which are damaging to themselves and others, and which undermine the credibility of the Church's witness. This policy is to provide a framework for handling complaints in a Biblical way and seeking to restore relationships wherever possible.

A complaints process is one of the means by which the Church recognises that all humans are made in the image of God, and are entitled to be treated as such, and by which it maintains its witness to the new life in which we are called through Christ.

This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the church may be responsible that have affected them. The Leadership Team (ministers and deacons) and all members are responsible for the well-being, flourishing and practice of the whole of Moortown Baptist Church according to our beliefs, values and vision.

In this Complaints policy Moortown Baptist Church aims to:

- Provide a clear and easy to use process
- Handle all complaints in a way that is consistent with Biblical principles seeking to resolve issues, disputes and disagreements amicably wherever possible and in a manner that restores relationship

All complaints and any associated information provided will be handled sensitively and in accordance with relevant data protection provisions.

However, trustees reserve the right to involve external parties (including police and other authorities) and to take legal advice where it is considered necessary.

### **Making a Complaint**

The Church hopes that wherever possible, initial discussion with the appropriate person in church may well have been enough to allay your concerns and to establish that the matter does not require further investigation. However, if the issue remains unresolved all members have the right to refer their concerns to the leadership team.

The involvement of any external party, with the exception of those required by current legislation, can only occur after the approval of the church meeting has been given.

If the matter is then to be taken further, complaints may be addressed to the Leadership Team either by email to [Leadershipteam@moortownbaptistchurch.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:Leadershipteam@moortownbaptistchurch.onmicrosoft.com) or in writing to the church address, Moortown Baptist Church, 204 King Lane, Leeds, LS17 6AA. Please mark your communication Private and Confidential.

The Church aims to treat all complaints seriously, confidentially and without bias or discrimination. You should complain within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about. This means that you need to write to or email the team setting out:

- who you are, plus your contact details
- the action and person you are complaining about, when it took place, what you think went wrong and why you are aggrieved

- Details of what you have done to try to resolve your concerns
- Any additional information and supporting evidence which supports your complaint
- What (if anything) you think the church should do to put it right
- Confirmation that you are happy for the detail of your complaint and supporting documentation to be provided to the person complained about should it be necessary to do so.

If someone else complains on your behalf, the Leadership Team will need written confirmation from you saying that you agree for that person to act for you. A member of the Leadership Team will promptly record receipt of a complaint.

### **How your complaint will be dealt with**

A member of the Leadership Team will write to you or send you an email to acknowledge your complaint within two weeks of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by representatives from the Leadership Team who will form the Complaints Committee for the specific complaint. If your complaint refers to particular individuals who are members of the Leadership Team these persons will not be involved in dealing with your complaint.

The Complaints Committee may invite you to meet with them and set out your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend / representative if you wish. The meeting should be held as informally as possible. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be minuted by the Committee.

The Leadership Team's nominated Complaints Committee will look into your complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any individuals, whether members of the Leadership Team or otherwise, to which your complaint refers. The nominated Complaints Committee may appoint one or more persons to look into the matter on its behalf but it will be the Complaints Committee that makes any decisions.

The Complaints Committee and any such appointed persons will treat the matter confidentially. If, in the light of the evidence, the Complaints Committee consider that your complaint is without merit, vexatious, malicious, or inappropriate they may declare it such and it shall be discontinued. The Complaints Committee will aim to provide a definitive response and write to you with the conclusions from their review along with reasons for that outcome.

The findings of the nominated Complaints Committee will be the Leadership Team's final response to your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the response you may appeal, within one month, in writing to the Leadership Team for your representations to be considered by someone other than the persons who took the original decision. However, you must be aware that this will not be a rehearing of your complaint but an examination only of whether the correct procedures have been followed. Your appeal must set out your grounds for appealing.

Please mark all communication 'private and confidential'.

Moortown Baptist Church – adopted by the Church Members Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021