



## Complaints Procedure

The Carmelite Order is committed to providing a high-quality service to all to whom we minister. When something goes wrong or if someone is unhappy about a service, the Order wants children, parents, external organisations or members of the public to tell us about it, as this will help us to improve our standards.

We hope that many issues can be resolved informally between the complainant and the church personnel involved. However, it is important to have a process to respond to complaints that cannot be resolved informally.

This complaints procedure is used to address complaints which may arise in response to:

- An alleged breach of the code of behaviour by church personnel.
- A particular practice issue.
- Perceived poor attitude of church personnel.
- A child feeling unhappy about an incident or an event.
- A parent/guardian feeling unhappy about an incident or event involving their child.
- Dissatisfaction in relation to an aspect of the service being provided.

**Note:** Complaints that relate to allegations or suspicions of child abuse will be addressed through the Carmelite child safeguarding reporting procedure.

### Who can make a complaint?

The Carmelite Order is open to receiving complaints from:

- Parents/Guardians.
- Children.
- An external organisation involved in interagency working.
- Member of the public or other who may have a legitimate concern.
- Staff/volunteers.

**Note:** Church personnel should raise issues or complaints with the prior or, if appropriate, a manager, following the internal procedures and the Protected Disclosures Policy.

It is important that service users and church personnel are aware of the complaints procedure and how to access it. Church personnel have a responsibility to assist service users to access the complaints procedure.

- Complaints can be made verbally and in writing.
- The Order encourages adults making a complaint to address it initially at source, that is directly with the person with whom they have the complaint.
- If this is not possible the complaint should be made to the prior of the community.
- Children may make a complaint to any church personnel, who will either deal with it directly or pass it on to the appropriate person.
- All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially.
- Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussions with the parents/guardians, children, church personnel, as appropriate.
- If this is not possible or someone remains dissatisfied a more formal process will be activated.
- The person making the complaint should complete the complaints form (pg. 91) and give it to the prior of the community or the Provincial.
- A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within seven days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
- All complaints must be thoroughly investigated. This will normally involve passing the complaint to the Provincial, who will review the matter and speak to the Carmelite friar or member of staff or volunteer who responded to the person making the complaint.
- The Provincial may organise a meeting to discuss, and hopefully, resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. They will do this within fourteen days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.
- Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the Provincial will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
- If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Provincial will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out his suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty-one days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Provincial again. At the conclusion of this step, the Provincial may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, the Provincial decides not to take further action, the process is completed. The Provincial should advise the complainant of their right to appeal the outcome. An appropriate independent person will be appointed to conduct the appeals process, which will be based on best practice in line with natural justice.
- All efforts will be made to resolve the complaint within eight weeks.
- All stages of the complaints procedures must be recorded in detail.