

Complaints Procedure

Version Control

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Contents

Introduction	1
Purpose	1
Responsibilities	2
Complaints Management.....	2
Complaints Regarding Parishes.....	2
Complaints to the Diocesan Offices.....	2
<i>Informal</i>	2
<i>Formal</i>	3
Complaints Appeals	3
Documenting and Reporting.....	3

Introduction

The Archdiocese of Dublin is committed to listening to viewpoints of individuals connected to the Diocese and welcomes both positive and negative feedback. If an individual is dissatisfied with any aspect of the work or services within the Archdiocese of Dublin, they are welcome to make a complaint.

The complainant should expect to have their complaint heard and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner. Such feedback will be considered valuable for the learning and development within the work and services of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

However, it should be noted that complaints which are evidenced to be of a purely malicious, fictitious or discriminatory nature, will not be entertained.

The title ‘Parish Priest’, when referenced within this procedure, also encompasses Co-Parish Priests and Parish Administrators where applicable.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to give guidance to staff and volunteers who may be in receipt of a complaint*. This should support staff and volunteers to manage complaints adequately to achieve greater complainant satisfaction and work toward resolution. It also serves to ensure feedback is used for the purpose of organisational learning and improvement.

****If a complaint relates to a safeguarding concern, then safeguarding procedures will have precedence over this Complaints Procedure****

Responsibilities

- Responsibilities for complaints management at Parish level lie with the local Priest
- Responsibility for managing informal complaints to the Diocesan Offices lie with the relevant Head of Office, based on the complaint subject matter. If a relevant Office cannot be clearly identified, the Office of the Moderator will be responsible to manage or direct the complaint.
- Responsibility for formal complaints to the Diocesan Offices lie with the Office of the Moderator. Appeals of formal complaints will be escalated to the Archbishop and the Board of Trustees where required.

Complaints Management

Complaints Regarding Parishes

Individuals experiencing difficulties, or who have concerns within a Parish, are entitled to have such concerns dealt with by the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest will discuss the issue as soon as practical upon receiving the complaint and take appropriate action. Official complaints to the Parish should be in writing and signed by the complainant.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint made to the Parish Priest, they may escalate their concerns to the Vicar Forane (or Episcopal Vicar if the Parish Priest is also the Vicar Forane). However, if the complaint is regarding a Priest, this should be managed by the Vicar for Clergy.

After following the above process, if the complainant is still unsatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal to the Board of Trustees (please see 'Complaints Appeals' section below).

Complaints to the Diocesan Offices

Informal

If an individual contacts the Diocesan Offices to make an informal oral complaint, where feasible, the complaint should be dealt with at the point of contact, or directed to the relevant Office to be dealt with promptly. If the staff member receiving the complaint is unsure which is the relevant Office, then they should refer the complaint to the Office of the Moderator.

If a complaint is in regards to a local Parish, the complainant should be advised to contact the local Parish directly.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their informal complaint, they are entitled to pursue the matter and make a formal complaint.

Formal

If an individual feel there is an issue of significant importance, or if they are unhappy with the outcome of an informal complaint to the Diocesan Offices, they are entitled to make a formal complaint to the Diocesan Offices by sending a signed written complaint to writing to the Office of the Moderator.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the below steps should be followed:

1. Contact the complainant within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
2. Arrange a call or meeting with the complainant to discuss in further detail their complaint. In the discussion enquire as to what actions the complainant would like taken to resolve the matter. Inform the complainant of the next steps in the complaints process and give them a timeframe of when they will receive a further response.
3. Further investigate the complaint. E.g.
 - a. Fact check that details in the complaint are accurate
 - b. If the complaint is against another individual or Office, give that individual or Office opportunity to respond.**
4. Determine what actions will be taken to resolve the matter.
5. Contact the complainant with the outcome of the investigation and actions that are to be taken.
6. Ensure responsibility for carrying out the actions agreed are clearly communicated with a timeframe for completion.
7. To close out the complaint, write to the complainant detailing the outcome of their complaint.

*****Please note, HR may be consulted or give support in cases where a complaint is against a member of staff or volunteer.*****

Complaints Appeals

If after following the above processes, the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they can appeal in writing; this appeal should be brought to the Archbishop who will determine if the matter should be brought to the Board of Trustees (or subcommittee if more applicable). Receipt of the complaint should be acknowledged by the Diocesan Offices within 5 working days, and the complainant informed of an anticipated timeframe for a response.

If determined appropriate by the Archbishop, the complaint should then be added to the next Board meeting agenda. All relevant details gathered regarding the complaint thus far should be provided to the Board of Trustees to allow informed discussion. After discussion, the Board of Trustees will determine if any further action is required, or if they require further information before a decision can be made.

The complainant should be kept informed of any delays and should receive the final outcome in writing.

Documenting and Reporting

It is important to document complaints received, particularly formal complaints. This record should be kept to support any appeals that may eventuate from a complaint and also for organisational

learning and improvements that may arise as a result of complaints. The following details should be documented in relation to complaints:

1. The date the complaint was received.
2. Who received and managed the complaint.
3. Details of the complaint and any investigations carried out regarding it.
4. Actions taken and the final outcome.
5. Details of dates and correspondences with the complainant throughout the process.

The Board of Trustees will periodically review complaints received for the purpose of organisational learning. To do this review, the Moderator and the Vicar for Clergy should periodically provide to the Board of Trustees, an overview of official and escalated complaints received with a summary of final resolutions.