



NARARAVALLEY
BAPTIST CHURCH

**Procedure for
Conflict Resolution**

**Addressing Conflict At
Narara Valley Baptist Church
(formerly “Grievance Policy”)**

**Version 4
2020**

Document Revision and Review History

Revision History

Rev	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	10/04/18	Craig Corkill	Initial Draft Framework Document
3.2	10/10/18	David Hampe	Added Process Flowchart as requested by the Board (provided by Craig)
4	02/09/20	Carolyn Corkill	Reviewed in line with Safe Church Checklist and change of name from Grievance Policy.

Review History

Rev	Date	Issued By	Approved By	Authorisation Capacity	Publish to Web
1.0	June 18	Craig Corkill	NVBC Board provided a Flowchart is included	NVBC Board Meeting - June	Yes
3.2	10/Oct 18	Craig Corkill	NVBC Board	Previously approved once amendment is made	Yes
4	1/09/2020	Carolyn Corkill	NVBC Board	NVBC Board Meeting – June 2021	Yes

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1. Purpose

The Procedure for Conflict Resolution (the **Procedure**) sets out a procedure for resolving conflict between two or more staff, volunteers, members or attendees of NVBC in a pastoral and restorative manner, rather than through a formal complaint handling procedure.

It is important to identify that some issues cannot be resolved in this manner, and this Procedure is **not** designed to:

- resolve issues relating to domestic violence, family law matters before the Family Law Court (or similar body),
- resolve complaints or concerns relating to abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child) or other serious breaches of the Code of Conduct that are to be resolved in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*; or
- replace any process set out in the Constitution of NVBC in relation to the disciplining or removal of members from ministry partnership of NVBC.

2. Scope

The process is to be followed when there is a misunderstanding and/or conflict situation (between two or more participants¹ of our church.) This applies to all staff, volunteers, ministry partners and attendees of NVBC.

In this process document misunderstanding and/or conflict situations are termed a 'grievance' between parties.

A grievance includes but is not limited to the following categories:

- a. A disagreement (including a conflict) between two or more people who are attendees of NVBC congregation.
- b. A perceived offence has been caused by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee to another.
- c. A perception by one person that they have been bullied by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee (and that it is a matter that is able to be resolved in a pastoral manner).
- d. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has fulfilled their ministry role.
- e. A complaint that a staff member or volunteer has committed a minor breach of the Code of Conduct.
- f. Dissatisfaction with an aspect of church life in terms of either the direction or method in which NVBC is being led. Although this grievance is not personal, the matter would be addressed to the ministry leader responsible for this aspect of church life.

¹ A 'participant' - An attendee of our church congregation is a person who regularly attends (at least once a month) a ministry of the church (e.g. Sunday services, Growth Groups, Friday night youth group)

3. Our Commitment

Our commitment is to provide a protocol for church leaders to address grievances within NVBC, in a Godly, loving, compassionate and procedurally fair manner.

This protocol is not applicable where there is a serious breach of the Code of Conduct. The process for responding to allegations of serious misconduct is outlined in the Safe Churches Policy. In cases where crimes are alleged, the police and/or appropriate authorities will be notified.

In implementing this protocol, we apply the overarching principles of:

- Seeking to glorify God in our responses to each other
- Striving to serve each other even in the midst of our disunity
- Seeking to grow Christ-like in our reactions to each other
- Extending grace to each other
- Focusing on restoration of relationships
- Seeking help where needed, to address grievances

NVBC acknowledges that:

- the nature of relationship breakdown means that it is necessary to respond sensitively and with care for all parties involved;
- in many conflict situations, to help each party understand the key issues and ways forward, the assistance of a neutral third party becomes essential;
- many issues are specific to a particular context and relationship and so must be responsive to this, seeking resolution of substantive issues and where possible, appropriate restoration of relationships between all parties;
- the pathway recommended by Church Leadership will depend upon the nature of the issue, the positions or roles of the parties involved and the skills and capacity of Church Leadership to address the situation.

4. Raising an Issue

a) Anyone may raise an issue

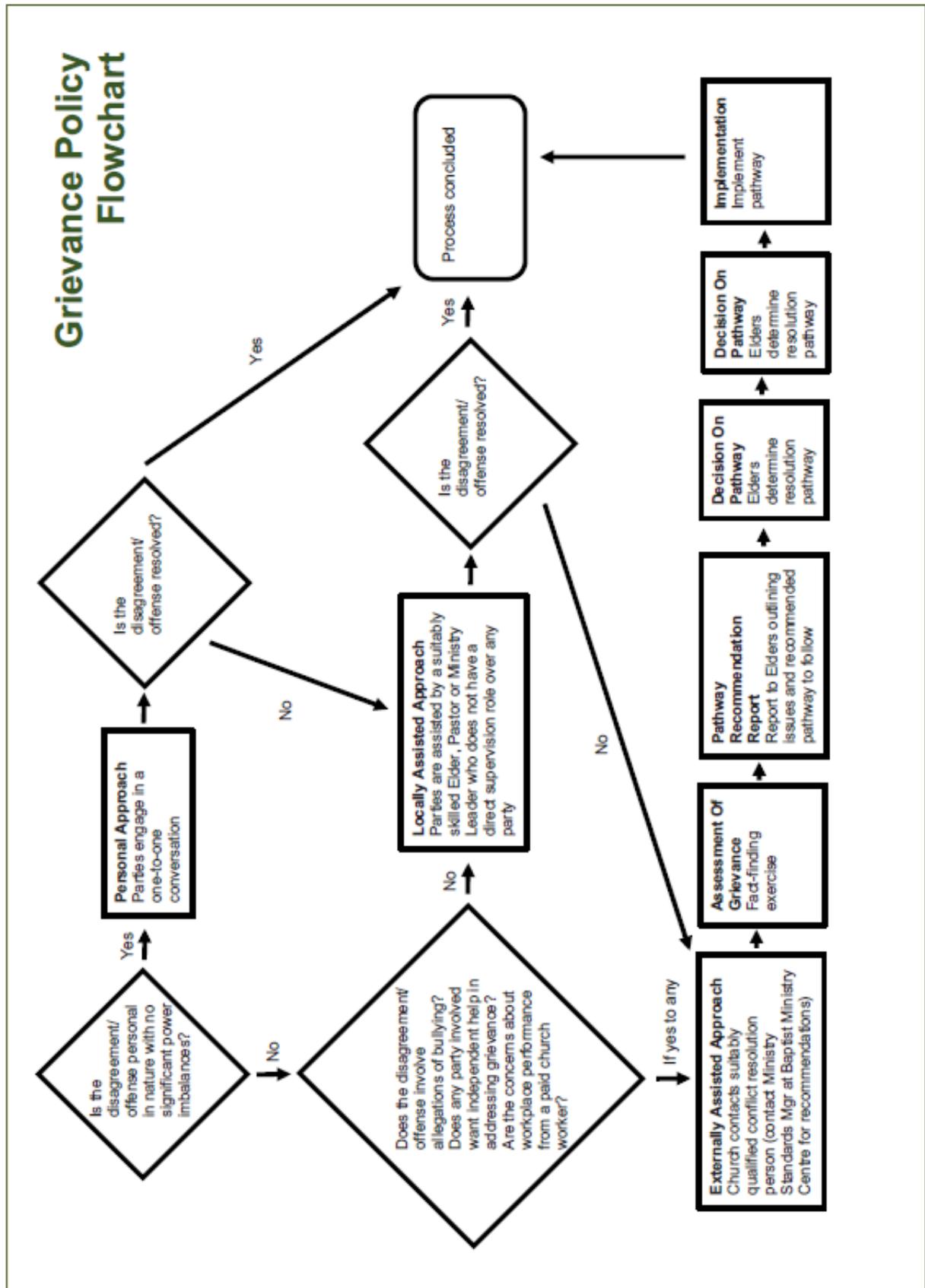
- with a person directly (see Pathway 1).
- with Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team in order to seek assistance in resolving the issue (see Pathway 2).

b) If the concern relates to a member of NVBC Leadership or the Safe Church Team, the person should raise their concern with another member of NVBC Leadership or Safe Church Team.

5. Procedure for Conflict Resolution Flowchart

Please refer to Section 6 of this document

This may need adjusting if the external pathway is different



6. Pathways Approach

6.1 Pathways Outlined

6.1.1 Personal Approach

This approach may be useful for addressing personal disagreements and perceived offenses. This is useful where there are not perceived significant power imbalances.

In the first instance where a grievance arises between a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee and another and they feel able to address their concern, they are to go to the other person and express their concern with a view to resolving their differences.

Peace making principles of glorifying God, serving each other and growing in Christ-likeness should be the focus in the attempts to resolve matters with the personal approach.

It may also be wise for the person who is initiating the personal approach to do some preparation in terms of seeking counsel from a wise and unbiased senior leader or external person, or engaging in some conflict coaching, before approaching the other party/ies.

6.1.2 Locally Assisted Approach

This approach may be useful for personal grievances where personal approach has not been successful in restoring the relationship, or where perceived bullying behaviours have taken place, or where there is dissatisfaction with the performance of a worker.

- a. In the event of any of the following then the matter should be brought to the attention of Church Leadership.
 - Pathway 1 being unsuccessful in restoring relationship; and/or
 - the issue relates to perceived bullying; and/or
 - the issue relates to dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has performed their ministry role.
- b. This approach is to be assisted by a suitably skilled Elder, Pastor or ministry leader who may fulfill this role with the permission of the Eldership. It is envisaged that at least one Elder or Pastor in the process needs to have training in conflict management. If no one does, training will be provided at church expense. Church Leadership are to avoid conflicts of interest where possible when selecting this person. In some cases, for example, where the conflict involves the Senior Pastor, a church consultant from the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT may be requested.

NOTE: the person should not have a direct supervision role over any party. All conflicts of interest are to be declared and managed.

- c. Where a person feels for any reason that they require help in resolving the grievance, they may speak privately to a church leader who is not a stakeholder in the grievance, to request assistance in addressing their grievance.

In general the NVBC leader to address grievances will be the Senior Pastor and/or the Narara Valley Baptist Church Eldership.

- d. Where the NVBC leader feels comfortable in assisting those impacted and where all parties involved in the grievance are willing to work towards restoring relationships, the NVBC leader is to:
- i. Value Confidentiality at all times.
 - ii. Meet with each party separately to ensure that all parties are given a chance to tell their story in private, work through the underlying concerns in moving towards resolution.
 - iii. Clearly communicate the process to be used to each party during resolution meetings.
 - iv. Hold meeting/s with all the parties to work through the issues to identify common ground and determine the course of action and desired outcome.
 - v. Follow up. Ensure that the solutions are implemented.
 - vi. If appropriate, monitor the situation over the following weeks, including to check-in with the parties to ensure that the situation is resolving and that relationships are being restored.
- e. At any stage throughout the process, the NVBC leader may contact the denomination for assistance or resourcing.

At any stage throughout the process, the person selected to assist to resolve the issue may contact Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT for assistance or resourcing.

6.1.3 Externally Assisted Approach

Where the grievance has:

- escalated beyond the ability or capacity of a church leader to resolve the substantive and/or relational issues, or
- where the local church or any party involved wants independent help in moving towards addressing the grievance, or
- the grievance involves allegations of bullying or
- concerns about workplace performance where NVBC worker is a paid person,

then, NVBC should contact a suitably qualified conflict resolution person to implement an external assisted approach. The Ministry Standards Manager (Ph: 1300 647 780), at the Baptist Ministry Centre may be able to recommend appropriately qualified people.

6.1.3.1. Assessment of the Grievance.

Upon receiving a request to assist with addressing a grievance, the external conflict resolution person will complete a fact-finding exercise and make an initial assessment of the situation.

6.1.3.2. Pathway Recommendation Report.

The external consultant will write a report to NVBC Eldership. This report will include an outline of key issues (material and relational) and recommend a resolution pathway to follow.

6.1.3.3. Decision on Pathway Towards Resolution.

Taking into account the report, and any other advice or submissions made by key stakeholders, NVBC Eldership shall determine the resolution pathway that will be employed in this situation.

6.1.3.4. Pathway Employed.

- Where the decision is made for any of conflict coaching, reconciliation, negotiation, or conciliation (mediation), the external consultant and relevant representatives of the Eldership will work with the parties on this pathway to bring about agreed solution
- Where the decision is made for arbitration, then the relevant denomination representatives, along with church Eldership will work with the stakeholders to work on an arbitrated solution to the substantive issues.
- Where the decision is made to implement a workplace bullying process, the Workcover process for addressing bullying shall be followed, an external consultant (Baptist Association or other) shall be engaged to carry out the investigation.
- Where the decision is made to implement a workplace performance process, an accountable and transparent processes shall be followed.

6.1.3.5. Implementation of Solutions.

Once all parties are in agreement, as far as is possible regarding solutions, then the Senior Pastor or their delegate (Pastor or Elder) shall communicate with all parties the implementation plan. Resources shall be given to implement the solution(s), both fiscal and human.

6.1.3.6. On-going Monitoring of the Situation.

NVBC representative who communicated the implementation plan above, will in negotiation with the parties, make health checks on the situation to ensure that the solutions that have been employed are working.

7. Escalation to Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff or Volunteers

During the course of resolving a concern in accordance with this Procedure, it may be necessary to escalate the matter in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*. There may be several reasons this is required, including:

- that on inquiry into the issue it is identified that the conduct complained of would more appropriately be characterised as a serious breach of the Code of Conduct (such as child protection concerns); or
- the subject of the concern is a staff member or volunteer and they are not willing to participate in this Procedure (as required under the *Code of Conduct*).

8. Escalation to Membership Removal Process

During the course of resolving an issue in accordance with this Procedure, it may be necessary to escalate the matter to the process for removing someone from membership of NVBC as prescribed in the Constitution of NVBC.

9. Acknowledgement

Adapted from:

- Protocol for Addressing Grievances Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn - January 2015
- Safe Ministry Resources Handbook. Chapter 8. 09/01/2017

Appendix 1 - Contact Details

Positions:

Position	Name	Contact Number
Senior Pastor	Craig Corkill	0448 113 381
Chairman/Eldership	Bryan Solomons	0419 382 457
Ministry Standards Mgr.	Jonathan Bradford	1300 647 780

Services:

Service	Contact
Police	000
Community Services NSW	13 36 27
Mandatory Reporters Guide	http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au