

# HCC Grievance Policy – SRE

## General Principles

We aim to provide a high quality SRE program with effective teaching methods and appropriate content, suitable to the age of the children.

This policy seeks to support parents or guardians who have a complaint by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving a grievance.

Negotiated solutions will aim to address the key issues and be acceptable to all individuals or parties involved without discrimination or victimisation, with minimum stress and maximum protection for all concerned.

HCC expects that all parties will be treated with dignity and respect.

## Definitions

**Grievance:** A wrong or hardship suffered (real or perceived), which is grounds for a complaint.

**Complaint:** An expression of grievance, dissatisfaction, or concern

**Victimise:** To act or omit to act towards a person in a way which is intended to cause disadvantage to that person because they have made a complaint, or may make a complaint, or may be, or are a subject of a complaint.

## Rights and Responsibilities

All persons have the right to:

- Make a complaint to the Senior Pastor or member of the Eldership
- Be treated with respect and impartiality
- Have the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness observed. This means:
  - Complaints must be fully described by the person with the grievance
  - The person who is the subject of concern must have a full opportunity to put forward their case
  - All parties to the complaint must have the right to be heard
  - All relevant submissions and evidence must be considered
  - Irrelevant matters must not be taken in to account
  - The decision-maker must be fair and just
- Investigation and proceedings that are conducted honestly, fairly and without bias
- No undue delay in investigations and proceedings.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved in a grievance to participate fully in the resolution process in good faith. Confidentiality must be respected and maintained at all times within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the matter, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure and consistent with the principles of natural justice.

# HCC Complaints Procedure - SRE

## Introduction

Hunter Christian Church's (HCC)'s aim is to ensure that parents or guardians with a complaint relating to the teaching of Special Religious Education (SRE) can use a procedure which can help to resolve the grievance as quickly and fairly as possible.

## Statement of Grievance

If a parent or guardian has a grievance about an incident occurring in SRE, they would firstly attempt to resolve the complaint by discussing it with the SRE teacher. Should the parent not feel confident to discuss the matter, they should complete a "Feedback Form" as linked to the HCC Website <https://goo.gl/forms/6AV0XYy33ca4TDDB2>

## Grievance Meeting

Within 7 working days, the Pastor will respond in writing to the statement, inviting the parent to attend a meeting with the Senior Pastor and an elder. It is in this meeting that the alleged grievance can be discussed. The parent is welcome to bring a support person with them to the meeting. This meeting will be scheduled to take place as soon as possible and normally five working days' notice of this meeting will be provided. The Senior Pastor/ Elders will also meet with the SRE Teacher.

Complainants should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting, but if for any unforeseen reason the complainant or Senior Pastor can't attend, the meeting will be rearranged. It is expected that 48 hours' notice would be a reasonable amount of notice to give for postponement.

After the meeting the Senior Pastor will write to the complainant informing them of any decision or action and offer them the right of appeal. This letter should be sent within 10 working days of the grievance meeting and should include details of how to appeal.

## Appeal

If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, they must set out their grounds for appeal in writing within 7 working days of receipt of the decision letter.

Within x working days of receiving an appeal letter, the complainant should receive an invitation to attend an appeal meeting. The appeal meeting should occur between the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Hunter SRE Committee.

After the appeal meeting, the Chairman of the Hunter SRE Committee will inform the complainant in writing of their decision, in a timely manner.