Policy Name: Complaints Policy		**Maybridge Community Church**
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Introduction

The Complaints Policy of Maybridge Community (MCC) outlines the process for addressing complaints regarding the conduct, decisions, or activities of MCC's Staff, Elders, Trustees, Partners, or Volunteers. This policy ensures that all complaints are handled fairly and promptly. The policy contains the details of *why* MCC does this. The full details about *how* complaints are handled, including the complaint form, are contained in the MCC Complaints Procedure.

General Principles

MCC strives to resolve differences informally and personally, guided by Biblical principles whenever feasible. However, in cases where informal resolution is not achievable or suitable, MCC will resort to a formal process to address complaints.

Eligibility to File a Complaint

Individuals do not need to be Partners of MCC to lodge a complaint. Anyone with reasonable grounds for a complaint, unable to resolve the issue informally or deeming it inappropriate to do so, is entitled to file a complaint.

Definitions

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an important issue seeking reassurance. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding actions taken or lack thereof. Both concern and complaint may pertain to individuals, activities, groups, or services provided by MCC.

Exclusions

Neither the policy nor procedure covers safeguarding concerns or employment grievances, which are addressed through specific protocols outlined in MCC's Safeguarding Policy and employee contracts, respectively.

How to Make a Complaint and Resolution Process

Complaints can be made via phone, in-person, or in writing. The procedure involves an informal stage, prioritizing reconciliation according to Biblical principles. If informal resolution fails or is deemed inappropriate, a formal process ensues.

Social Media

Confidentiality is paramount; therefore, complainants should refrain from disclosing complaints on social media platforms to maintain the integrity of the formal procedure.

Timescales
Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or series of incidents. Exceptions to this timeframe may be considered under exceptional circumstances or if legal actions are ongoing.

Resolving Concerns
MCC is committed to addressing concerns promptly, offering empathetic responses, explanations, or acknowledgments of possible mishandlings. Informal resolution follows Biblical principles, aiming for mutual understanding.

Formal Process (Stage 1)
Complaints are recorded using MCC's designated form. Complaints should be addressed to the Operations Director, or Chair of Trustees if concerning the Operations Director. The MCC typically does not investigate anonymous complaints unless under the whistleblowing policy.

Dealing with a Complaint
Upon receipt, the relevant person acknowledges the complaint within 10 working days and initiates an investigation. A response is provided to the complainant within 15 working days of the investigation's conclusion.

Confidentiality and Data Protection
Complaints are treated in accordance with MCC's privacy policy. While confidentiality is maintained, MCC may disclose information in certain circumstances, adhering to data protection regulations.

Appealing a Decision (Stage 2)
Complainants dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response may appeal to the Chair of Trustees within 10 working days. The appeal is acknowledged within 10 working days and reviewed within 25 working days. The Trustees' Appeals Panel investigates the complaint and communicates the outcome to the complainant.

Conclusion
Upon completion of the three part process (informal, formal, appeal) the complaints procedure concludes, and MCC reserves the right to cease further correspondence.